

## "Grazie Santita"



Pope Benedict XVI at the Ash Wednesday mass in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican, Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2013. (AP Photo/Gregorio Borgia)

**NICOLE WINFIELD**  
Associated Press

**VATICAN CITY (AP)** — Beginning a long farewell to his flock, a weary Pope Benedict XVI celebrated his final public Mass as pontiff, presiding over Ash Wednesday services hours after a bittersweet audience that produced the extraordinary scene of the leader of the world's billion Catholics explaining himself directly to the faithful. The mood inside St. Peter's Basilica was somber during the Mass, as if the weight of Benedict's decision and the finality of his pontificate had finally registered with the thousands present. The basilica erupted in a rousing standing ovation as Benedict exited for the last time as pope, bringing tears to the eyes of some of those closest to him. "We wouldn't be sincere, Your Holiness, if we didn't tell you that there's a veil of sadness on our hearts this evening," Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Benedict's long-time deputy, told the pope at the end of the service, his voice breaking.

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# Define American



Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, immigration rights activist and self-declared undocumented immigrant Jose Antonio Vargas testifies on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2013, before the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on comprehensive immigration reform.

(AP Photo/Susan Walsh)

## Hearing reveals deep divide on immigration

**GARY MARTIN**

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**WASHINGTON** — Divisions between Democrats and Republicans over citizenship for undocumented immigrants were exposed Wednesday when the Senate opened its first hearing on the emotional issue of immigration reform. Pro-immigration protesters shouting "Stop the Deportations" interrupted the hearing of the Senate Judiciary Committee, which is expected to write an immigration reform bill that could be brought to vote within months. And despite a bipartisan framework on comprehensive immigration reform that enjoys support from Demo-

crats and Republicans, the hearing showed that differences remain over how to best rewrite broken U.S. immigration laws. Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., the committee chairman, said immigration reform legislation must include a pathway for citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants in this country. And he said he was troubled by Republican arguments that the Southwest border must first be secured before a citizenship program can be implemented. "I am troubled by any proposal that contains false promises in which citizenship is always over the next mountain," Leahy said. "I

want the pathway to be clear and the goal of citizenship attainable." But Leahy was immediately rebuffed by Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., who accused Democrats of seeking an "amnesty only" approach to immigration reform through citizenship proposals. "There is a lot of overconfidence about this bill," Sessions warned. "If it's not going to work, it's not going to pass." Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, the ranking Republican on the committee, said "an overnight legalization program for millions of lawbreakers is a short-term band-aid, not a long-term solution." Although a bipartisan

framework with Democrat and Republican support has been laid out, lawmakers are still working out the nuts and bolts of how and when to provide citizenship to undocumented workers. The plan calls for an earned citizenship that requires penalties, a background check, English language skills and standing at the back of the line behind immigrants seeking citizenship through legal channels. The Senate hearing included testimony from Steve Case, the former head of America Online, who urged lawmakers to look at the issue as one of global competitiveness.

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**Pope Benedict XVI acknowledges the applause at the end of the Ash Wednesday mass in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican, Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2013.**

(AP Photo/Gregorio Borgia)

## Pope Benedict XVI rejoices final public Mass as pontiff

Continued from front

"Thank you for having given us the luminous example of the simple and humble worker in the vineyard of the Lord," Bertone said, quoting Benedict's words when he first appeared on the loggia overlooking St. Peter's Square after he was elected pope.

Smiling and clearly moved, Benedict responded, "Grazie. Now let us return to prayer" — his words bringing to an end several minutes of thundering applause. Then, in a rare gesture and sign of respect, the bishops removed their mitres.

"Viva il papa!" the crowd yelled as the pope stepped off the altar, assisted by two clergymen, and departed St. Peter's aboard a moving platform to spare him the long walk down the aisle.

Ash Wednesday marks the start of Lent, the most solemn season on the church's liturgical calendar that ends with Holy Week, which commemorates the death of Christ and his resurrection on Easter Sunday. By this Easter, on March 31, the church will likely have a new pope.

The scene was festive earlier in the day, when Benedict took the extraordinary

step of speaking directly to his flock about why he had broken with 600 years of tradition and decided to retire on Feb. 28.

"As you know, I have decided to renounce the ministry that the Lord gave to me on April 19, 2005," Benedict said, to warm applause. "I did this in full liberty for the good of the church."

He thanked the faithful for their prayers and love, which he said he had "physically felt in these days that haven't been easy for me."

And he asked them to "to continue to pray for me, the church, and the future pope."

Benedict looked tired but serene as he basked in a standing ovation when he entered the packed hall for his traditional Wednesday catechism lesson. His speech was interrupted repeatedly by applause, and many in the audience of thousands had tears in their eyes.

A huge banner reading "Grazie Santita" ("Thank you Your Holiness") was strung up and a chorus of Italian schoolchildren serenaded him with one of his favorite hymns in German — a gesture that won over the pope, who thanked them for singing a piece "particularly dear to me." □

## Caribbean celebrates tourism rebound

**DANICA COTO**  
**Associated Press**  
**SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)**

— The number of people traveling to the Caribbean is bouncing back to pre-recession levels, with visitors from Canada and the U.S. giving a boost to a region struggling to recover from a global economic crisis, a top tourism official said Wednesday.

About 25 million tourists visited the Caribbean last year, a more than 5 percent increase from 2011. It's a growth rate that outpaced the rest of the world, which saw arrivals increase by 4 percent, said Beverly

3 percent increase from 2011. The numbers mark a return to pre-recession levels, Nicholson-Doty said.

The U.S. territories of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands fared the best, reporting a nearly 7 percent jump in tourists. From January to August last year alone, more than 1.1 million people visited Puerto Rico, mostly from the U.S. mainland.

Recent visitors include James Trucksess, a 46-year-old extermination business owner from North Brunswick, New Jersey. He flew again to Puerto Rico this week to escape the crip-

than 4 percent last year, on par with pre-recession levels five years ago. Canada also remained one of the Caribbean's largest markets, with tourists from that country increasing by nearly 6 percent in 2012. Meanwhile, the number of visitors from the United Kingdom dropped by 10 percent to 1 million last year, with tourism officials blaming weak European economies and high airfares coupled with a controversial air passenger duty.

Cruise ship tourism was flat across the Caribbean for the last three years. Some



**Island guests enjoy the splendor of world famous Palm Beach on Aruba.**

(Handout Photo)

Nicholson-Doty, chairwoman of the Barbados-based Caribbean Tourism Organization.

"All the signs suggest Caribbean tourism is rallying," said Nicholson-Doty. "The region as a whole has regained ground lost in the heat of the global economic depression."

The Caribbean also saw its largest number of stayover visitors in five years, with the region's overall hotel occupancy increasing by more than 7 percent and total room revenues up by nearly 9 percent.

And tourists spent big while visiting the Caribbean last year, dropping more than \$27 billion, a more than

pling snowstorm that recently hit the northeast U.S. coast. "It's nice, it's warm and there's a lot of history," he said as he strolled near a historic fort with a cigar in one hand and a cup of coffee in another. "I come here pretty much for the history and the food as well." Coming in second for visitor arrivals was the Dutch Caribbean, reporting a 5.6 percent increase from 2011 thanks to a surge in business from South America. The most popular islands were Aruba and Curacao, just north of Venezuela. The bulk of tourists visiting the Caribbean come from the U.S., a number that increased by more

islands suffered more than others, with Barbados, Grenada, St. Vincent, Dominica and the British Virgin Islands seeing a double-digit percentage drop in cruise ship passenger arrivals last year. A slight increase is cruise ship tourism is expected next year after Disney Cruise Lines begins departing from the Puerto Rican capital of San Juan, generating an estimated \$5 million in revenue from the four departures scheduled in 2014. Those cruise ships will stop for the first time at the eastern Caribbean island of Grenada, which saw a nearly 22 percent drop in cruise ship passengers in 2012. □



## North Korea nuke test could prove intelligence goldmine

ERIC TALMADGE  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON/TOKYO  
(AP) — North Korea's under-

ground nuclear test shows it is making big strides toward becoming a true nuclear power. But the test may also reveal key clues the secretive nation might have hoped to hide about how close, or how far away, it is from fielding a nuclear weapon capable of striking the United States or its allies. Hoping to capitalize on a rare opportunity to gauge North Korea's nuclear capabilities, intelligence and military officials around the region are scrambling to glean data to answer three big questions: how powerful was the device Pyongyang tested, what sort of device was it, and what progress does the test indicate the nation has made. North Korea hailed Tuesday's test as a "perfect" success, saying it used a device that was stronger and more advanced than those in its past two attempts. Add that to its successful rocket launch in December and the threat of a North Korea ready to strike at the United States, which it sees as its arch-enemy, would appear to be more real than ever. But just how close is it? The main thing intelligence officials want to figure out is what kind of device was used. Was it a plutonium bomb, like the ones it tested in 2006 and 2009, or one that used highly enriched

uranium?

James Acton, an analyst with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said North Korea's plutonium stockpile is small and it would be difficult and expensive for the North to produce more. But a test using highly enriched uranium, which is cheaper and easier to produce, would raise the threat that North Korea can expand its nuclear arsenal quickly. "A highly enriched uranium test would be a significant development," he said. "Unfortunately, we don't yet have any evidence as to the device's design yield or whether it was made from plutonium or highly enriched uranium." Finding that out is a race against time. Joseph De Trani, former head of the National Counterproliferation Center, predicted U.S. intelligence would determine the size and composition of the nuclear device in one to three days based partly on radioactive elements released into the environment.

"Highly enriched uranium is something that degrades quickly, so you would have to collect within a 24-hour period," especially because the traces from an underground explosion will be minimal, he said. Neighboring Japan may provide some of those answers. Its fighter jets were dispatched immediately after the test to collect atmospheric samples. □



South Korean army soldiers walk on a snow covered road near the border village of Panmunjom, which has separated the two Koreas since the Korean War, in Paju, north of Seoul, South Korea, Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2013.

(AP Photo/Lee Jin-man)



From left, Attorney General Eric Holder, outgoing Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and Secretary of State John Kerry during a joint session of Congress on Capitol Hill in Washington.

(AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

## Kerry: Response to North Korea will send strong message to Iran

MATTHEW PENNINGTON  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The world must show its resolve in the face of North Korea's nuclear provocations or risk emboldening Iran, which is under scrutiny over its uranium enrichment program, Secretary of State John Kerry said Wednesday. Kerry said nations must agree on a "swift, clear, strong and credible response" to Pyongyang's third nuclear test and the authoritarian regime's "continued flaunting of its obligations."

In defiance of U.N. Security Council resolutions, the latest issued last month, North Korea on Tuesday detonated a nuclear device at a remote underground site. It is seen as a key step toward its goal of building a bomb small enough to be fitted on a missile capable of striking the United States.

Iran, like North Korea, is also under stiff sanctions, and negotiations with the West over its nuclear program have similarly stalled. Iran maintains the program is peaceful, for generating energy and for medical research, not for weapons. It said Wednesday that it has begun installing a new

generation of centrifuges that will allow it to vastly increase its pace of uranium enrichment in defiance of U.N. calls to halt such activities.

There has been speculation that North Korea and Iran could be cooperating on missile and nuclear development. Kerry did not draw such a connection but did say the cases were linked because they both concerned nonproliferation. "It's important for the world to have credibility with respect to our nonproliferation efforts," Kerry told reporters after meeting Jordanian Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh at the State Department.

"Just as it's impermissible for North Korea to pursue this kind of reckless effort, so we have said it's impermissible with respect to Iran. What our response is with respect to this will have an impact on all other nonproliferation efforts." The U.N. Security Council has issued three separate resolutions on North Korea, in response to its nuclear and missile tests since 2006. The latest resolution, which tightened sanctions, followed a December satellite launch that the U.S. says could serve to devel-

op the North's ballistic missile capability.

The resolution warned of "significant action" if Pyongyang conducted another rocket launch or a nuclear test.

"If you are going to say things, they have to mean something. And to mean something you have to be prepared to follow up, and that's exactly what we are prepared to do," Kerry said. European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton, speaking Wednesday at the Security Council, called North Korea's nuclear test "a further blatant challenge to the global non-proliferation regime." She said it was vital for the international community to stand united and demonstrate "that there are consequences of continued violations."

In Washington, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said North Korea's actions represent a clear threat to the United States and undermines regional security. He vowed that the U.S. will take whatever steps necessary to meet its commitment to South Korea, including continued military exercises and increases in missile defense in the region. □



# Treasury nominee Lew stresses bipartisan skills

ANNIE LOWREY

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**WASHINGTON** — Jacob J. Lew, President Barack Obama's nominee for Treasury secretary, appeared before the Senate Finance Committee on Wednesday morning where he was expected to face questions about his approach to the country's fiscal issues as well as his work on Wall Street.

In his opening remarks, Lew stressed his longstanding qualifications on budget issues and his ability to work with Republicans.

"Working across the aisle while serving under President Clinton, I helped negotiate the groundbreaking agreement with Congress to balance the federal budget," he said. "And as budget director, I oversaw three budget surpluses in a row even as we pursued policies to speed economic growth and create jobs." He added that he has been involved in



**White House Chief of Staff Jack Lew, center, nominated by President Barack Obama to be the new Treasury secretary, walks to his seat during his confirmation hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington, Feb. 13, 2013. The Senate Finance Committee is considering Lew's nomination after Timothy Geithner, the last Treasury secretary, stepped down last month.**

(Doug Mills/The New York Times)

"almost every major bipartisan budget agreement over the last 30 years," and that "the things that divide Washington right now are not as insurmountable as they might look."

But as one of Obama's main budget negotiators

in the past few years, Lew has at times clashed with Republicans, particularly in the House. Former Treasury Secretary Timothy F. Geithner, not Lew, acted as a main negotiator during the talks over the automatic tax increases and spend-

ing cuts, the so-called fiscal cliff, that Congress cut a deal to avoid last month. Lew, a longtime Democratic aide and recently departed White House chief of staff, is expected

to win the support of the committee and ultimately the confirmation of the whole Senate. As a former State Department aide and budget director, Lew has already won Senate confirmation twice during the Obama administration. But Republicans have promised to grill Lew over the government's trillion-dollar deficits, the White House's spending plans and the sluggish economy. They have also raised questions about his short tenure at Citigroup, where he received a \$940,000 bonus before leaving to return to public service.

At the outset, Sen. Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, stressed that the Treasury secretary's responsibilities go far beyond the budget, and said he wanted to know more about Lew's expertise in and thoughts about the financial system and its regulation. □

## Hearing reveals deep divide on immigration

Continued from front

He said reform is needed to provide highly skilled engineers and scientists.

Also testifying was Jose Antonio Vargas, an undocumented immigrant and award-winning journalist. He said he has not seen his mother in 20 years, after she sent him from the Philippines to live with relatives in California.

Vargas has become an immigration reform advocate and founded the group Define American to educate policy makers on the issue.

Janet Murguía, National Council of La Raza president, said following her testimony that the Senate hearing marks a milestone for Latinos, "sending the message that immigration reform is on track to pass before the end of 2013."

Also at issue is border security goals that must be met to trigger mechanisms to provide a path to citizenship, something many GOP lawmakers insist must be

part of any legislation.


Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano told the committee that U.S. borders were more secure than at any time in history. "Our borders, in fact, have never been stronger," Napolitano said.

Under questioning, Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, cited a 2010 study by the Government Accountability Office, the investigative arm of Congress, which showed that only an estimated 61 percent of illegal crossers are apprehended along the U.S.-Mexico border.

"I believe we have a long, long way to go," Cornyn said.

Other criticism focused on the low morale at U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Napolitano acknowledged the low morale, but noted that ICE agents face criticism for deporting more undocumented immigrants than at any time in history, and also failing to deport all people here illegally. □



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## Obama takes his second term agenda on the road

MARK LANDLER

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**ASHEVILLE, N.C.** — President Barack Obama toured a Canadian-owned auto parts factory near here on Wednesday to promote his second-term economic agenda, as Republicans and some Democrats in Washington expressed doubts that many of its items would ever be enacted.

A day after he spoke to a divided Congress, Obama chose a politically friendly corner of Republican-leaning North Carolina to promote the resurgence of U.S. manufacturing, one of the central messages of his State of the Union speech Tuesday night.

"What's happening here is happening all around the country," Obama said against a backdrop of three hulking engine blocks. "Just as it's becoming more and more expensive to do business in places like China, America is getting more competitive."

The outskirts of this North Carolina mountain town was the first of three stops on a road show that has become a ritual after the State of the Union address. Faced with a balky Congress, Obama will try to build popular support for his proposals to invest in education, energy and public works projects.

The president played up his proposed increase in the federal minimum wage, to \$9 an hour from \$7.25. "If you work full time, you shouldn't be in poverty," he said.

But Republicans swiftly rejected the idea, saying it would drive up unemployment.

In touring a factory on the outskirts of Asheville that is owned by an Ontario company, Linamar, Obama showcased his goal of making the United States a magnet for manufacturing jobs.

Linamar, which makes parts for heavy-duty engines, recently opened its fourth U.S. manufacturing plant here, taking over a closed Volvo construction equipment factory. The plant has hired 160 workers and plans to take on 40 more by the end of 2013.

"A few years ago, a manufacturing comeback in North Carolina, a manufacturing comeback in Asheville, may not have seemed real likely," Obama said. "This plant had gone dark."

Speaking to several hundred workers, Obama reiterated his ideas for bolstering manufacturing, which include eliminating tax breaks for companies that move jobs overseas and offering incentives for them to build factories in the United States. □



President Barack Obama speaks at the Linamar engine-parts factory in Asheville, N.C., Feb. 13, 2013. (Stephen Crowley/The New York Times)

## Mom says she forgave man who held her boy in bunker

RUSS BYNUM

Associated Press

The mother of an Alabama boy held for days in an underground bunker said in an interview broadcast Wednesday that she forgave her son's captor early in the standoff and asked authorities not to harm him. Jennifer Kirkland's son, Ethan, was a captive for six days in rural Midland City, Alabama, before FBI agents entered the bunker and killed 65-year-old Jimmy Lee Dykes.

Authorities said Dykes had snatched Ethan off

a school bus after fatally shooting the driver.

Dykes "took care of Ethan to the best of his abilities" by cooking chicken for the boy and asking hostage negotiators to bring the child his favorite toy car, his mother told Dr. Phil McGraw in an interview for the "Dr. Phil Show."

"From the very beginning I had already forgiven Mr. Dykes, even though he still had my child," Kirkland said. "...I asked that he not be hurt. But if it came down to it, you know, of course I want my child safe." □

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## AP source: Ex-cop's license found in burned cabin

**GILLIAN FLACCUS**  
**TAMI ABDOLLAH**  
**Associated Press**  
**BIG BEAR LAKE, California (AP)** — Police scoured mountain peaks for days, using everything from bloodhounds to high-tech helicopters in their man-hunt for a revenge-seeking ex-cop.

They had no idea he was hiding among them, holed up in a vacation cabin across the street from their



Photo shows ex-LAPD officer Christopher Dorner.  
 (AP Photo/LAPD)

command post. It was there that Christopher Dorner apparently

took refuge last Thursday, four days after beginning a deadly rampage that would claim four lives.

The search ended Tuesday when a man believed to be Dorner bolted from hiding, stole two cars, barricaded himself in a vacant cabin and mounted a last stand in a furious shootout in which he killed one sheriff's deputy and wounded another before the building erupted in

flames. He never emerged from the ruins and hours later a charred body was found in the basement of the burned cabin along with a wallet and personal items, including a California driver's license with the name Christopher Dorner, an official briefed on the investigation told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because of the ongoing investigation. Authorities believe the

remains are those of the former Los Angeles police officer, but they have not been formally identified.

"We have reason to believe that it is him," San Bernardino County sheriff's spokeswoman Cynthia Bachman said.

A driver whose truck was taken by a carjacker believed to have been Dorner said Wednesday the man appeared calm and didn't want to hurt him. □

## Republican says she'll oppose Hagel confirmation

**RICHARD LARDNER**  
**Associated Press**  
**WASHINGTON (AP)** — A moderate Republican senator said Wednesday she'll oppose the confirmation of

Chuck Hagel to become President Barack Obama's secretary of defense, while other Republican senators signaled they may delay a floor vote on the nomination unless the White House provides more information about the deadly attack on the U.S. diplomatic mission in Benghazi, Libya.

Republican Sen. Susan Collins had been viewed as a possible supporter of Hagel, but she said Wednesday that his views on the most critical threats facing the United States are "unsettling." In a four-page statement, Collins said Hagel was unwilling to ask the European Union to designate Hezbollah a terrorist organization in 2006, and he has been hesitant to back the use of all non-military options, such as unilateral sanctions, to pressure Iran into ceasing its nuclear program. As Collins voiced her opposition, Democratic Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid set the stage on Wednesday for a full Senate vote on Hagel's nomination. Reid filed a motion to limit debate and force a vote, which is expected to be held on Friday. Democrats hold a 55-45 edge in the Senate and have the numbers to confirm Hagel on a majority vote, but would need the support of five Republicans to clear the way for an up-or-down vote on Hagel. A bitterly divided Senate Armed

Services Committee on Tuesday voted to approve Hagel by a 14-11 vote, with all the panel's Democrats backing him to succeed Defense Secretary Leon Panetta. The committee's Republicans were unified in their opposition to their onetime colleague, a former two-term Republican senator from Nebraska and twice-wounded Vietnam combat veteran. "I am unable to support Senator Hagel to be the next secretary of defense because I do not believe his past positions, votes, and statements match the challenges of our time, and his presentations at his (confirmation) hearing did nothing to ease my doubts," Collins said. "I regret having to reach that conclusion given our personal relationship and my admiration for Senator Hagel's military service. But I have concluded that he is not well-suited for the tremendous challenges our country faces during this dangerous era in our history." □

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## Carnival cancels 12 more cruises on troubled ship

**RAMIT MASTI**  
**Associated Press**

**HOUSTON (AP)** — Carnival Cruise Lines has canceled voyages through April aboard the Triumph, a ship that has been plagued by mechanical problems in recent weeks and was finally left powerless in the Gulf of Mexico after an engine-room fire.

Carnival's announcement of the 12 canceled trips came Wednesday as the Triumph was being towed by two tugboats to a port in Mobile, Alabama, with more than 4,000 people on board, some of whom have told relatives that conditions on the ship are dismal and that they have limited access to food and bathrooms.

Two other cruises were called off shortly after Sunday's fire.

Debbi Smedley, a passenger on a recent Triumph cruise, said the ship had trouble on Jan. 28 as it was preparing to leave Galveston.

Hours before the scheduled departure time, she received an email from Carnival stating the vessel would leave late because of a propulsion problem. Passengers were asked to arrive at the port at 2 p.m., two hours later than originally scheduled.

The ship did not sail until after 8 p.m., she said.

"My mother is a cruise travel agent so this is not my first

ride. I have sailed many, many cruises, many, many cruise lines. This was, by far, I have to say, the worst," said Smedley, of Plano, Texas.

On its most recent journey, the Triumph lost power Sunday after a fire in the engine room. The ship floated aimlessly until Tuesday when two tugboats met it in the Gulf and began towing it to Mobile, Alabama. Carnival disputes the accounts of people on board who say the ship is filthy, saying they are doing everything to make sure passengers are comfortable. Weather permitting, the Triumph should arrive in Mobile sometime Thursday.

Carnival spokesman Vance

Gulliksen acknowledged the Triumph's recent mechanical woes, explaining that there was an electrical problem with the ship's alternator on the previous voyage. Repairs were completed Feb. 2.

Testing of the repaired part was successful and "there is no evidence at this time of any relationship between this previous issue and the fire that occurred on Feb. 10."

According to the email sent to passengers on Jan. 28, the issue affected the ship's cruising speeds, delaying its arrival in Galveston. The email also informed Smedley and other passengers that the propulsion problem would prevent them

from docking at two ports.

"Due to the limited cruising speed, our itinerary will be impacted. Depending on the progress of the repairs, we will either visit Progreso or Cozumel," stated the email, signed by Vicky Rey,

way ceiling near her cabin, and a separate sewer line broke outside the main dining hall, she said. Metal was protruding from handrails on the staircases, and the elevators were often not operating.



**In this photo provided by Carnival Cruise Lines, Gerry Cahill, president and CEO of Carnival Cruise Lines, addresses media representatives during a news conference regarding the cruise ship Carnival Triumph Tuesday, Feb. 12, 2013, at the company's headquarters in Miami. After a Sunday, Feb. 10, engine room fire that left the Triumph without propulsion in the Gulf of Mexico, the ship is being towed to Mobile, Ala., and is expected to arrive there Thursday, Feb. 14. There are no reported injuries.**

(AP Photo/Andy Newman)

vice president of guest services. "The good news is that we will remain docked overnight at either port." Smedley said the ship was in poor condition overall. During her five-day cruise, a water line broke in the hall-

Rather than docking in Progreso for only a few hours as planned, the ship stayed in the port for two days, and cruise workers repeatedly told passengers they were waiting for parts to fix a mechanical problem,

she said.

Jay Herring, a former senior officer with Carnival Cruise Lines who worked on the Triumph from 2002 to 2004, said that although the ship was not problematic when he was on it, he had been on another vessel that seemed to have problems nearly every voyage. The Holiday, which at that time was the oldest ship in Carnival's fleet, has since been sold to another company, he said.

"It seemed like it had problems every cruise or every couple of cruises," said Herring, who also authored the book "The Truth About Cruise Ships."

"So it may not be unusual to have recurring problems."

The Triumph, he said, is the size of three football fields or a skyscraper laid on its side. It takes five generators — with one on backup — to power the ship, and 80 percent of that energy is needed to simply push the massive vessel through the water, Herring said.

Each of those generators is the size of a bus, so it's unrealistic to think that the ship could have enough backup power on board to run services when the engines die, Herring added.

"It's one of their bigger ships. It's certainly on the top end of Carnival's fleet," he said of the Triumph. "There are so many moving parts and things that can go wrong." □





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## EU ministers call for emergency meat testing

**RAF CASERT**  
**Associated Press**

**BRUSSELS (AP)** — European Union nations on Wednesday called for more intensive testing for a month to try to contain the scandal in which horsemeat was sold as beef.

The emergency meeting at EU headquarters included nations most affected by the horsemeat scandal that has swept through Europe, with millions of burgers and frozen meals recalled across the continent.

Ireland's Agriculture Minister Simon Coveney suggested the scandal would likely spread further as more countries test beef.

Germany said Wednesday it had received a shipment



suit," said Coveney, who chaired the meeting. "As they tested they found that the problem has been getting bigger and bigger."

The nations also proposed that investigations in Ireland, France, the Netherlands and other nations should now be coordinated by the EU's Europol law enforcement agency.

□ "What was clear, was the absolute unity of purpose of the member states to get to the bottom of this," said Britain's Environment Secretary Owen Paterson. "We do not know exactly what has gone wrong."

The testing proposal envisions requiring EU members to test 6,500 beef samples for traces of horsemeat and a harmful equine medicine known as Bute during the month of March. Results would be announced April 15.

The plan will now be considered at a specially called meeting of food and animal health experts on Friday, when the 27 member states are expected to back the call.

Representatives of Britain, Ireland, France, Romania, Poland, Luxembourg and Sweden attended Wednesday's meeting. □

European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy Tonio Borg, right, talks with British Secretary of State for the Environment, Food, & Rural Affairs Owen William Paterson, center, and President of the EU rotating Council and Ireland's Agriculture Minister Simon Coveney, at the European Council building in Brussels, Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2013. Agriculture ministers from the EU countries most affected by the scandal over horse meat found in products labelled as beef, were due to meet for an exchange of information in Brussels on Wednesday evening.

(AP Photo/Yves Logghe)

of tainted frozen meals and Norway pulled products from its stores.

Ireland found horsemeat in burgers last month after

routine testing.

"Once we got the positive test and the investigation was under way, obviously other countries followed

## 6 new arrests in UK phone hacking probe

**LONDON (AP)** — British police investigating computer hacking and privacy offenses by the media on Wednesday arrested six people alleged to be involved in intercepting voice mails for the defunct News of the World tabloid.

Authorities said the six former journalists for the tabloid were arrested in a new line of inquiry to the ongoing investigation in Operation Weeting, which is one of three investigations into press wrongdoing.

Britain's power structure has been rattled

by allegations that the now-closed News of the World hacked people's phones for stories. The allegations and scandal have touched off dozens of arrests. Police say the new suspected conspiracy is believed to have taken place primarily during 2005-2006. The six were interviewed at police stations in London and Cheshire, and searches were carried out at a number of addresses.

All but one of the suspects were released on bail late Wednesday. □



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# Russian arms trader: Syria shipments will continue

V. ISACHENKOV  
Associated Press

**MOSCOW (AP)** — Russia will keep supplying weapons to Syrian President Bashar Assad's regime despite the country's escalating civil war, the head of Russia's state arms trader said Wednesday. Russia on Wednesday also held out the prospect of bringing the two sides in the Syrian conflict together for talks in Moscow. Mikhail Bogdanov, a deputy foreign minister and special envoy to the Middle East, said Syria's foreign minister and the leader of the Syrian National Coalition are expected in Moscow in two to three weeks. He said no date for either visit has been set.

"We are prepared to provide the venue for Syrian talks if they want to meet in Moscow," Bogdanov was

quoted by Russian news agencies as saying. Anatoly Isaikin, the director of Rosoboronexport, said Russia sees no need to stop its arms trade with Syria as the trade isn't prohibited by the United Nations. He dismissed Western criticism of Russian arms sales to Assad's regime, saying his company has only delivered defensive weapons. "In the absence of sanctions, we are continuing to fulfill our contract obligations," Isaikin said at a news conference. "But these aren't offensive weapons. We are mostly shipping air defense systems and repair equipment intended for various branches of the military." Moscow has been the main protector of Assad's beleaguered regime, joining with China at the U.N. Security Council to

block attempts to impose sanctions on Assad amid a civil war in which more than 60,000 people have died.

of dollars' worth of missiles, combat jets, tanks, artillery and other military gear. It's the last Kremlin ally in the

sive against Assad has intensified, the Kremlin has sought to distance itself from Assad, signaling that it is resigned to him eventually losing power. But Moscow has continued to oppose sanctions against Damascus and warned that the fall of Assad's regime could plunge Syria even deeper into violence and also encourage the rise of extremist groups across the region. Alexei Pushkov, the Kremlin-connected head of foreign affairs committee in the Russian parliament's lower house, said Wednesday that Assad's downfall would create a "second Afghanistan" and reaffirmed that Russia would continue to reject the calls for the Syrian ruler's resignation as a precondition for peace talks. □



Anatoly Isaikin, the head of Russia's state arms trader Rosoboronexport, speaks at a news conference in Moscow, Russia, on Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2013. The head of Russia's state arms trader says Moscow will continue shipping weapons to the government in Syria despite the country's escalating civil war. (AP Photo/Ivan Sekretarev)

For more than four decades, Syria has been Moscow's top ally in the region and has received billions

Middle East and hosts the only naval base Russia has outside the former Soviet Union. As the rebel offen-

# Book tying Angola generals to diamonds protected

JON GAMBRELL  
Associated Press

**JOHANNESBURG (AP)** — Angola received a boost to its free speech from Portugal, which refused to allow Angolan generals to stop the publication of a book exposing corruption and human rights abuses in the southern African country's lucrative diamond mines.

Portuguese prosecutors this week threw out a libel suit against a book that alleges Angolan generals own a diamond company and a security firm that carried out killings and the torture of workers toiling in the southern African nation's mines.

The dismissal of the challenge, brought against Angolan writer Rafael Marques and his publisher over his book "Blood Diamonds: Corruption and

Torture in Angola," represents a free-speech victory for a nation where the government has long been accused of corruption and mismanagement of oil and diamond riches. While the challenge played out in Portugal, Angola's former colonial ruler, Marques said the court case could have bankrupted and effectively silenced him while frightening others investigating government corruption.

"Their belief was being very rich and very powerful, especially within the Portuguese economy where they have made massive investment, they would have created the situation by whereby I would not be able to afford a lawyer to defend myself," the author told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

"They thought by putting me in a situation of pover-

ty, I would not have been able to afford the cost of justice."

Mining company Sociedade Mineira do Cuango and security firm Teleservice-Sociedade de de

Telecomunicacoes, Seguranca e Servicos filed the complaint against Marques and publisher Tinta-da-China after the book was published.

The book linked the gen-

erals to the companies, which Marques allege carried out about 100 killings and tortured hundreds of others with the aid of soldiers and weapons supplied by military armories. □

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## Egyptian officials accused of covering up torture

**SARAH EL DEEB**  
**Associated Press**

**CAIRO (AP)** — An Egyptian opposition group accused the government on Wednesday of covering up torture at the hands of security forces. The charge came after a government forensic report claimed 28-year-old activist Mohammed el-Gindy was killed in a car accident. It contradicted family and friends, who said he died after he was electrocuted and beaten on his head repeatedly in detention earlier this month. In



Egyptian protesters throw stones while security police open water cannons on them from inside the grounds of the presidential palace during a demonstration in Cairo, Egypt.  
 (AP Photo/Khalil Hamra)

a separate case, activists also accused authorities of trying to conceal the identity and age of 12-year-old Omar Salah, killed by security forces' gunfire during clashes around Cairo's Tahrir Square on Feb. 3. In El-Gindy's death, initially the justice minister, who oversees the state forensic authority, said it was caused by a car accident. But then the chief of the forensic authority denied the justice minister's statement and said the report was not final. When the final report came

out, it listed car accident as the cause of death, leading some to suspect foul play. Security officials deny that they held him. El-Gindy was a member of the Popular Current opposition group, which called the forensic report "fraudulent" and said it will challenge it. "The Popular Current plans to pursue a legal complaint, charging that the forensic authorities have forged it, and will go after all those who took part in this crime," the statement said. □

## EU hopes for Iran flexibility in nuclear talks

**EDITH M. LEDERER**  
**Associated Press**

**UNITED NATIONS (AP)** — The European Union's foreign policy chief expressed hope Wednesday that Iran

will show flexibility at upcoming talks on its nuclear program so that "substantial progress" can be made to address international concerns about its nuclear

ambitions. Catherine Ashton, who has been steering negotiations on behalf of six key nations trying to rein in Iran's nuclear program, said "there is no doubt"

that the pressure of sanctions is bringing Iran back to the negotiating table. The U.N. Security Council has imposed four rounds of sanctions against Iran since December 2006 in hopes of pressuring the government to suspend enrichment, which it has refused to do. The United States and the EU have added even tougher sanctions. Iran says it is enriching uranium only to power reactors and for scientific and medical purposes. But many countries fear its real goal is to produce nuclear weapons. Ashton raised Iran at a Security Council meeting on EU-U.N. cooperation in which she discussed other global hot-spots including Mali, North Korea and Syria. She said that after "very lengthy consultations," representatives from the six key powers that have been trying to restart negotiations with Iran — the

U.S., Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany — will meet Iranian officials on Feb. 26 in Kazakhstan. "We hope Iran will come to this negotiation with flexibility, and that we can make substantial progress," Ashton said. The six parties are determined to work towards a solution of the Iranian nuclear issue based on the longstanding "dual-track" approach — promoting diplomatic engagement and building pressure, she said. While sanctions are bringing Iran back to negotiations, Ashton stressed that "sanctions cannot be an end in itself." "The key is for Iran to comply fully with its international obligations," she said. Alireza Miryusefi, spokesman for Iran's U.N. Mission, responded that the Islamic Republic "is serious about those talks and expects the other side to be serious and forthcoming so that the next round of negotiations ... would lead to positive and fruitful results." □

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## Afghan officials welcome drawdown, others dismayed

**PATRICK QUINN**  
**Associated Press**

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — President Barack Obama's decision to bring half of America's 66,000 troops home within a year was

fate.

He persuaded NATO to agree on a 2014 deadline for the departure of foreign combat troops just over two years ago. He and Obama also agreed last

been made about how many U.S. troops could remain in the country after December 2014 when most foreign forces will have left. Administration officials have said they are considering a residual U.S. troop presence of as few as 3,000 and as many as 15,000.

The Afghan Defense Ministry said it was prepared for the responsibility.

"We welcome the decision," Defense Ministry spokesman Mohammad Zahir Azimi told The Associated Press. "We are ready to fill the vacuum and we

are ready to take full responsibility for security in 2013."

Some Afghans disagreed and said they were taken aback that so many American troops would leave even before the 2014 deadline. Persistent violence and a spate of so-called insider attacks by Afghan troops against their foreign partners have raised concern about the readiness of government forces to take over their own security.

"I was surprised with this number and I didn't expect that 34,000 U.S. troops will

leave Afghanistan," former army Gen. Amrullah Aman, adding that he thinks the Afghan army is too weak to defend the country.

"They don't have equipment, there is no air force," he said.

The Taliban welcomed the drawdown, but said the entire U.S.-led coalition should leave immediately.

Many Afghans, however, fear that any quick drawdown will destabilize a country that is still fighting insurgents more than 11 years after the American invasion. □



Afghan men watch a television news report on U.S. President Barack Obama's State of the Union address in Kabul, Afghanistan Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2013.

(AP Photo/Musadeq Sadeq)

welcomed Wednesday by Afghan officials who have long agitated to control their country, but was greeted with dismay by Afghans who think America failed to keep its promise of a better and safer life.

A troop drawdown was widely expected, but for the first time, Obama said how many. For some Afghans, Obama's State of the Union address on Tuesday underscored the reality that foreign troops were indeed leaving — and sooner than expected.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai viewed the announcement as good news. He has pushed for a faster withdrawal of international troops, arguing that his country is sovereign and should control its own

month for Afghan troops to take the lead for security around the country this spring — months ahead of schedule — as foreign forces take the backseat and shift to an advisory and training role.

"This is something Afghanistan has wanted for so long now," Karzai's office said.

He also applauded Obama's commitment to speed up the timetable for handing over the lead for security to Afghan forces. "The withdrawal in the spring of foreign forces from Afghan villages will definitely help in ensuring peace and full security in Afghanistan."

Obama said the first 34,000 troops will leave Afghanistan within a year.

So far, no decision has



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## Venezuela devalues currency amid dollar shortage

**FABIOLA SANCHEZ**

**Associated Press**

**CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)**

— Venezuela's currency devaluation took effect on Wednesday amid questions about how the government can get a grip on 22-percent inflation and satisfy growing demand for dollars to pay for imported goods.

Some economists predict that the devaluation won't solve problems such as a dearth of dollars for imports and shortages of some staple foods.

The country's fifth devaluation in a decade established a new government-set rate of 6.30 bolivars to the dollar, replacing the previous rate of 4.30 bolivars. Venezuela also has a flourishing black market in which bolivars are being traded for more than three times the new official rate. Economist Jose Guerra said he still doubts that the Central Bank and government currency agency will be able to meet heavy demand for dollars, especially now that officials have eliminated a state-run bond trading system that had provided dollars at a second-tier rate.

Vice President Nicolas Maduro, who has taken on additional authority during the past two months while President Hugo Chavez has been away in Cuba for cancer treatment, has said the government has enough dollars from oil earnings to meet all the needs of the economy. But Planning and Finance Minister Jorge Giordani has said that dollars will go toward "priority" goods, leading some economists to conclude that the

government seems to be stiffening its currency exchange controls.

Venezuela's government has maintained strict currency controls since 2003. Under the controls, people and businesses must apply to a government currency agency to receive dollars at the government-set official rate to import goods, pay for travel or cover other obligations.

Giordani said at a news conference Wednesday that a new entity being

created by the government, called the Superior Body for the Optimization of the Exchange System, will be in charge of overseeing the distribution of dollars for priority imports. The government typically has favored companies importing food, medicines and other basic goods.

Government officials haven't provided details about how they plan to meet the demands of importers and other businesses for dollars that used

to be provided through the government-run bond market.

Sporadic shortages of some basic foods such as sugar, flour, cornmeal and cooking oil have worsened during the past few months while the government has been making available fewer dollars at the fixed exchange rate. Amid heavy demand for foreign currency, economists estimate the black market has recently been satisfying about 12 percent of the demand for dollars in the country.

Many Venezuelans have turned to buying cars, appliances and other goods to try to protect the value of their money as the country's inflation has eroded the value of their savings. But Ronald Balza, an economics professor at Andres Bello Catholic University in Caracas, said he doesn't expect much of an additional buying boom by consumers after the devaluation because the measure had been widely expected for months and many Venezuelans had already been buying large numbers of appliances and electronic

items since late last year to try to convert their bolivars into goods that would hold their value.

The devaluation should further drive up inflation, but the effect won't be immediate because the government allowed for some previously approved dollar transactions to be completed at the previous rate for imports of food, construction supplies and other goods, Balza said in a telephone interview.

Guerra, an economics professor at Central University of Venezuela, also predicted that the devaluation is likely to push inflation to 25 percent this year, following 20 percent inflation during 2012.

Industry Minister Ricardo Menendez, however, said the devaluation shouldn't increase inflation.

He said the government will step up inspections of businesses that receive dollars at the official rate to make sure they aren't engaging in price speculation.

The government has announced similar measures after previous devaluations and also maintains price controls on many foods and other items. □



**People withdraw money from cash machines where election propaganda supporting Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez cover the nearby walls in Caracas, Venezuela. Venezuela's currency devaluation took effect on Wednesday amid questions about how the government can satisfy growing demand for dollars to pay for imported goods. (AP Photo/Fernando Llano)**

## Rio returns to real life after Carnival

**JENNY BARCHFIELD**

**Associated Press**

**RIO DE JANEIRO (AP)**

— The world's Carnival capital picked up the pieces on Wednesday, after five straight days of decadent costume balls, raucous street parties and heavy drinking.

Street cleaners were out in force in Rio de Janeiro to erase the last traces of

nearly 700 street parties that have snarled traffic and littered the streets and sidewalks with mountains of trash.

Rio's Comlurb waste management company said it collected some 300 tons of garbage from Rio's streets throughout the festivities.

Workers had to swap their pirate, sailor and kitty cat costumes for suits, ties and

demure office separates as many of the shops, banks and offices that shuttered during Carnival reopened on Wednesday.

But revelers reluctant to abandon the celebrations so quickly can still seek refuge in a few last Carnival activities, including Wednesday's announcement of the winner of this year's samba school com-

petition.

Twelve top-tier schools wowed spectators with their thumping percussion sections, imaginative floats and sexy samba queens swathed in nothing more than a sprinkling of sequins and a puff of ostrich feathers at two all-night parades Sunday and Monday at Rio's iconic Sambadrome. □





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that AAA resulted as the winner of this prestigious award, as in 2010 AAA also received the award for Excellence in Airline Marketing at Routes' Americas Conference in Lima, Peru in the category Central America and Caribbean. The annual Routes awards are highly regarded as the most valuable awards in the industry as they are voted for and judged by the airline network planning community. They provide the airline community with the chance to have their say as to which airport they think

or innovative techniques to establish new or maintain and develop existing routes. "We don't want to sound arrogant, but we were very confident about our airline marketing efforts in the last year and had a feeling that this year was going to be ours! It is a fantastic success for our marketing team and it shows the airlines' appreciation for our consistent proactive approach towards our main industry partners. The nominations and awards are an important benchmark for us to monitor how we are doing compared



The award adds on to "Highly Commended" and runner-up status for the World Routes Awards received in Abu Dhabi in 2012. This is the second time

provides the best overall marketing services to them whether it be about their particular relationship, effective results, provision of data and information

to the competition, since all airports go full swing nowadays to charm the airline industry. This award is a great way for us to have a credible recognition which

we can proudly talk about to our customers and other stakeholders," said Peter Steinmetz, CEO of AAA. In the picture Head of Airline Marketing Jo-Anne

Arends together with the Business Unit Manager Terminal Barbara Brown proudly display the award received in Cartagena, Colombia last Monday. □



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# Aruba's AHATA reiterates that it is not anti-union



The CEO of AHATA, Mr. Hepple

**ORANJESTAD** - On Friday February 8th the Court of Aruba decided in favor of the hotels and said that the Government mediator, Mr. Pontilius, did not involve employers nor the employers' interests sufficiently when making a decision on whether or not he was going to grant the unions' petition to hold referenda. The ruling also said a further court case, which

was seeking clarification of the original law regarding unionization at the category level, should be decided upon.

The CEO of AHATA, Mr. Hepple, said this court case was just the first step in what would be an ongoing process. He made it very clear that the hotels and tourism businesses were not against the employees' right to unionize and that should the majority of employees in any hotel or business express their preference for being represented by a union that decision would be respected by the employers.

He said however that AHATA and the hotels do not agree that unionization can occur at the departmental, or the sub-departmental level within the same property. Mr. Hepple said "This is the essence of our court case against the Government's mediator, and we do not believe it was the intent of those who drafted the original law

that it would allow unionization at that micro level. This could result in a single hotel having 20 or more different collective working agreements which would be a nightmare for employees and employers alike."

Mr. Hepple then expressed grave concern at the role of the Government's mediator in this process. He said the whole intent of the original law was to reduce labor unrest but that the recent actions and statements of the Government's mediator were doing just the opposite. He continued by saying that the generally accepted definition of mediation was "a process wherein the parties meet with a mutually selected impartial and neutral person who assists them in the negotiation of their differences." He said that this was not happening, that the Government mediator clearly expressed his antagonism towards AHATA and the hotels, was obviously favoring the unions

and had abandoned any attempt to show impartiality in this matter.

The CEO concluded by saying "AHATA totally rejects any expressions that its members are unfair employers. What we are concerned about is the future of the tourism industry and the investment climate of Aruba. This industry is virtually all we have and Aruba has to work together to ensure the industry's continuing success. It is a very competitive world and to see a future where our industry is torn apart by internecine battles with employee pitted against employee, with customer service destroyed, with investor confidence eroded, is not what Aruba wants or needs. You only have to look at what has happened elsewhere in the region to see how quickly a tourism industry can fall apart when hotels find themselves more concerned with resolving disputes amongst unions than in serving their customers".

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## NHL Roundup



Nashville Predators center Colin Wilson celebrates after scoring in overtime to give the Predators a 1-0 win over the San Jose Sharks in an NHL hockey game Tuesday, Feb. 12, 2013, in Nashville, Tenn.

Associated Press

## Thlusty leads Hurricanes over Devils

**NEWARK, New Jersey (AP)**

— Jiri Thlusty scored two goals in the third period and Cam Ward made 26 saves as the Carolina Hurricanes beat New Jersey 4-2 on Tuesday night, snapping the Devils' five-game winning streak.

Jussi Jokinen and Patrick Dwyer also scored for Carolina, which went 4-1-1 on its six-game road trip.

With Carolina on the power play, Thlusty flipped a shot toward the net that bounced off Devils defenseman Bryce Salvador and over goalie Martin Brodeur at 7:25. Eric Stall earned an assist, extending his point streak to 10 games.

Thlusty later added an empty-net goal.

Ilya Kovalchuk and Ryan Carter scored for the Eastern Conference-leading Devils, who lost in regulation at home for the first time this season (5-1-1).

Continued on Page 20



# RECORD RUN

## LeBron sets mark, Heat top Blazers 117-104

Miami Heat's LeBron James (6) goes to the basket against Portland Trail Blazers' Damian Lillard, left, during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Miami, Tuesday, Feb. 12, 2013. James became the first player in NBA history to score 30 points and shoot at least 60 percent in six straight games as the Heat won 117-104.

Associated Press  
Page 19



# U.S. teenager Shiffrin ready for ski worlds debut

**ANDREW DAMPF**

**AP Sports Writer**

**SCHLADMING, Austria (AP)**

— Not every 17-year-old walks into their first world championships with medal expectations and a roomful of media waiting for her. For Mikaela Shiffrin, it's another challenge this season that she's handling like an old pro.

The American high school student has won three World Cup slaloms to match a season record set by Austrian great Annemarie Moser-Proell.

When Shiffrin won in Flachau last month, she was exactly the same age — 17 years, 308 days — as Moser-Proell was when she earned her third career victory in 1971. Moser-Proell holds the all-time record of 62 World Cup wins.

That explains why it wasn't just American media asking Shiffrin how she's handling it all, but also Austrian, Swiss and German reporters.

"Pressure is just a frame of mind," Shiffrin responded. "I'm doing this for me. I'm racing because I've always loved racing, that adrenaline rush that can't be replaced. That's all I'm doing when I'm in the start. I'm not thinking about what my friends want me to do or what my parents want me to do. ... It's as simple as that."

Shiffrin's first race is Thursday's giant slalom, an event in which she's had

three top-10 finishes this season. Then comes the main event, Saturday's slalom, where she'll be a top contender alongside overall World Cup leader Tina Maze, Olympic champion Maria Hoefl-Riesch, Veronika Velez Zuzulova, who has won two races this season, and Marlies Schild.

Shiffrin holds a 33-point lead over Maze atop the World Cup slalom standings, but she's quick to point out that most of her success this season has come since Schild was sidelined by a right-knee injury while slalom training in December.

Schild, who has won 33 World Cup slaloms, one short of Swiss standout Vreni Schneider's record, is planning to return for Saturday's race.

"I've had three wins and I'm proud of it but I've always felt like there was that piece missing because Marlies is a slalom queen," Shiffrin said this week. "I can win snow princess or all these different titles but she wasn't there, so I'm excited to have her back. I'm sure there's a lot of pressure on her but I think she's going to perform strongly and I'm really excited to race against her. It's a complete field now."

Shiffrin warmed up for the worlds by training with the Italy men's team last week. "In a run of 50 seconds, she was losing one or two seconds to guys like (Stefano)



**U.S. ski racer Mikaela Shiffrin arrives to attend a press conference at the Alpine skiing world championships in Schladming, Austria, Tuesday, Feb. 12, 2013.**  
Associated Press

Gross and (Olympic champion Giuliano) Razzoli," U.S. technical coach Roland Pfeifer said.

By the next world championships on Shiffrin's home slopes in Vail-Beaver Creek, Colorado, in 2015, she could be entered in more than just the technical events.

Shiffrin's ultimate objective is to become an all-around skier like teammate Lindsey Vonn.

"She has one very clear goal, to become the overall World Cup champion as fast as possible," Pfeifer said. "That's what she's saying, that's what she's working on. I think she hasn't realized yet that when she

adds super-G and downhill to the program she will have less time to train slalom and GS."

For now, the coaches are keeping Shiffrin to the technical events.

"As long as she's not perfect in slalom and GS, we won't even talk about the speed disciplines," Pfeifer said. "She already wants to enter these events. We will do a little bit of super-

G next season but as soon as we see that slalom and GS are suffering, we'll cut it back."

But Pfeifer did allow a glimpse of what Shiffrin might be capable of in speed. "She has enormous potential as a super-G and downhill racer," he said. "She's an excellent glider." For now, the main focus in training has been giant slalom. □

## Els hopeful of no ban on belly putters

**DOUG FERGUSON**

**AP Golf Writer**

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — With

only a few weeks left before a decision on long putters, British Open champion Ernie Els hopes golf officials change their minds. Els used a belly putter when he won at Royal Lytham & St. Annes. That made him the third champion in the last five majors to use a putter anchored to the body. The U.S. Golf Association and Royal & Ancient Golf Club have proposed a new rule that would outlaw clubs being anchored to the body. The 90-day comment period on the new rule is over at the end of this month. Els says he hasn't seen any data that would lead to a ban on the putting stroke. He also



**Ernie Els of South Africa plays his shot on the 9 hole during the Second round of the Commercial Bank Qatar Masters held at Doha Golf Club in Qatar, Thursday, Jan. 24, 2013.**  
Associated Press

doesn't think it was an issue until he and Webb Simpson won consecutive majors. □

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# LeBron on a roll unlike any in NBA history

**TIM REYNOLDS**  
AP Basketball Writer

**MIAMI (AP)** — When LeBron James first heard about the streak of NBA games with at least 30 points and 60 percent shooting, he did not immediately think about who was on the list. He thought about who wasn't.

Wilt Chamberlain? Not there. Michael Jordan? Not there. Shaquille O'Neal? Not there, either. In NBA history, only Adrian Dantley and Moses Malone had put together five straight 30-point, 60-percent efforts — that is, until James joined their super-exclusive club. And now, he stands alone. James scored 30 points on 11 for 15 shooting to get into the NBA record books and Chris Bosh scored 32 points and grabbed 11 rebounds as the Miami Heat beat the Portland Trail Blazers 117-104 in a wild, momentum-swinging game on Tuesday.

"It kind of blew my mind," James said. "To see how small the list was and for me to even be a part of the list, to start off, it's like, 'Wow.'"

"Wow" doesn't even come close to summing up how he's been in the last six games. He's shot 66 for 92 — and take away a "slow" 6-for-12 start at Toronto on Feb. 3, he's made 60 of his last 80 field-goal tries, a ridiculous 75 percent success rate. He's scored either 30, 31 or 32 points in all six of these games.

His latest brilliance came in Miami's 1,000th regular-season win. But the only history anyone will remember was what James ac-

complished.

"I'm at a loss for words," James said. "Like I say over and over, I know the history of the game. I know how many unbelievable players who came through the ranks, who paved the way for me and my teammates."

"And for me to be in the re-

cord books by myself with such a stat — any stat — it's big-time."

In other NBA games it was Toronto 109, Denver 108; Miami 117, Portland 104; Memphis 108, Sacramento 101; Utah 109, Oklahoma City 94; Houston 116, Golden State 107; and L.A. Lakers 91, Phoenix 85. □



Miami Heat's LeBron James (6) high-fives teammate Dwyane Wade (3) as they head to the bench for a timeout during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Portland Trail Blazers in Miami, Tuesday, Feb. 12, 2013. Associated Press

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# Cleveland Indians sign pitcher Daisuke Matsuzaka

**GOODYEAR, Arizona (AP)** — Japanese pitcher Daisuke Matsuzaka has officially joined the revitalized Cleveland Indians. Matsuzaka, limited to just 18 starts in the past two seasons because of elbow issues, signed a minor-league contract on Wednesday. The 32-year-old is being reunited with manager Terry Francona, beginning his first season with the Indians. The two spent several seasons together with the Boston Red Sox. Matsuzaka will compete to win a spot in Cleveland's rotation. If he's added to the 40-man roster, Matsuzaka will make \$1.5 million this season. He can earn an additional \$2.5 million in performance bonuses. Matsuzaka went 50-37 in six seasons with the Red Sox, who signed him to a \$52 million contract in 2007. He went a combined 33-15 in his first two seasons, but is only 17-22 since 2008. He underwent reconstructive elbow surgery in 2011. □

**Cleveland Indians pitcher Daisuke Matsuzaka, of Japan, throws during baseball spring training in Goodyear, Ariz., Tuesday, Feb. 12, 2013.**  
Associated Press

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**New York Rangers defenseman Ryan McDonagh (27) falls over Boston Bruins center Tyler Seguin (19) as they chase the puck during the second period of an NHL hockey game in Boston, Tuesday, Feb. 12, 2013. Boston Bruins left wing Brad Marchand (63) trails the play.**

Continued from Page 17

## DUCKS 3, BLACKHAWKS 2, SO

**CHICAGO (AP)** — Viktor Fasth made two stops in the shootout to remain perfect in six starts and Anaheim beat Chicago in a matchup of the top two teams in the Western Conference.

After Jonathan Toews converted the first shootout attempt for Chicago, Fasth stopped Patrick Kane's backhand and denied Brandon Saad on the right side of the goal to become the first goalie to win his first six NHL starts since Dan Ellis with Dallas and Nashville from Feb. 18, 2004 to Nov. 29, 2007.

Nick Bonino and Corey Per-

ry scored in the tiebreaker for Anaheim, which improved to 3-1 on its season-high, six-game road trip.

## RANGERS 4, BRUINS 3 SO

**BOSTON (AP)** — Ryan Callahan scored as the final participant in the shootout and the New York Rangers recovered after blowing a three-goal, third-period lead to beat Boston.

Henrik Lundqvist stopped 37 shots, plus three of the four attempts in the shootout. Carl Hagelin scored for the second straight game, and Derek Stepan and Anton Stralman each added an unassisted goal for the Rangers.

Tuukka Rask made 26 saves for the Bruins, who have three losses this season and two of them are to the Rangers after regulation. □








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## Federer cruises into 2nd round at ABN AMRO

**ROTTERDAM, Netherlands (AP)** — Defending champion Roger Federer cruised into the second round of the ABN AMRO World Tennis Tournament on Wednesday by beating Grega Zemlja 6-3, 6-1. Federer, a two-time winner at the indoor hard court tournament, had taken a two-week break after losing a grueling five-set semifinal to Andy Murray at the Australian Open and he showed signs of rustiness early against Zemlja. The Slovenian dropped only one point on his first two service games and then forced two break points on Federer's serve in the fourth game. But that was as good as it got for the No. 64-ranked Zemlja. Federer switched up a gear, saved both break points and broke in the next game and again in the ninth game to take the opening set.

The second set was over even quicker, with Federer closing out the match in 58 minutes.

Federer conceded he took a while to get into his stride after his break and get used to the conditions at

Ahoy arena. "Hall play is different. It's warmer, so the ball flies more and it takes a bit of

getting used to," he said. "The first ones are never easy. But I'm happy to be back and playing well." □



**Roger Federer of Switzerland eyes the ball as he returns a shot against Grega Zemlja of Slovenia at the ABN AMRO world tennis tournament at Ahoy Arena in Rotterdam, Netherlands, Wednesday Feb. 13, 2013.**  
 Associated Press

## Azarenka, Radwanska into 3rd round at Qatar Open

**MICHAEL CASEY**  
**AP Sports Writer**  
**DOHA, Qatar (AP)** — Fresh off winning a second consecutive Australian Open, top-ranked Victoria Azarenka breezed into the third round of the Qatar Open with a 6-2, 6-3 victory over Romina Oprandi on Wednesday. The defending champion was joined by fourth-ranked Agnieszka Radwanska and former No. 1 Caroline Wozniacki. Radwanska beat Australian qualifier Anastasia Rodionova 6-3, 6-2, and Wozniacki downed Sorana Cirstea of Romania 7-6 (7), 6-0. American Sloane Stephens, who upset Serena Williams in the Australian

Open quarterfinals, lost to Klara Zakopalova 4-6, 7-6 (5), 7-6 (5). "Today was a tough match," Stephens said of the wind and 80-degree temperatures Fahrenheit. "The conditions were tough but Klara played well. Now I just need to regroup and keep working on my game and get ready for Dubai." Stephens pulled out of Fed Cup against Italy last week after aggravating an abdominal muscle injury and suffering from a stomach virus. Azarenka will retain her top ranking if she reaches the final and Williams fails to reach the semifinals. She made a nervous start, dropping serve to fall 2-0 behind. □



**Belarus Victoria Azarenka a reacts after winning a point during her match against Romina Oprandi of Switzerland on the third day of the WTA Qatar Ladies Open in Doha, Qatar, Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2013.**  
 Associated Press





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<p>Nicholas Hoult Teresa Palmer</p> <p><b>WARM BODIES</b>              With Spanish Subtitles              Mon - Thurs 9:10              Sat &amp; Fri 9:10 / 11:25              Sun &amp; Holi 9:10</p>	<p>Jessica Chastain Nikolaj Coster-Waldau</p> <p><b>MAMA</b>              Mon - Thurs 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30              Fri 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30 / 11:55              Sat 2:00 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30 / 11:55              Sun &amp; Holi 2:00 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30</p>
<p>Jeremy Renner Gemma Arterton</p> <p><b>Hansel &amp; Gretel</b>              With Spanish Subtitles              Mon - Thurs 5:15 / 7:35 / 9:30              Fri 5:15 / 7:35 / 9:30 / 11:45              Sat 2:00 / 5:15 / 7:35 / 9:30 / 11:45              Sun &amp; Holi 2:00 / 5:15 / 7:35 / 9:30</p>	<p>Billy Cristal Bette Midler</p> <p><b>PARENTAL GUIDANCE</b>              With Spanish Subtitles              Mon - Fri 4:30 / 6:50              Sat, Sun &amp; Holi 2:10 / 4:30 / 6:50</p>
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## SARS-linked virus may have spread between people

**MARIA CHENG**  
**AP Medical Writer**

**LONDON (AP)** — British officials say a mysterious virus related to SARS may have spread between humans, as they confirmed the 11th case worldwide of the new coronavirus in a patient who they say probably caught it from a family member.

The new virus was first identified last year in the Middle East and the 10 people who have previously been infected had all traveled to Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan or Pakistan.

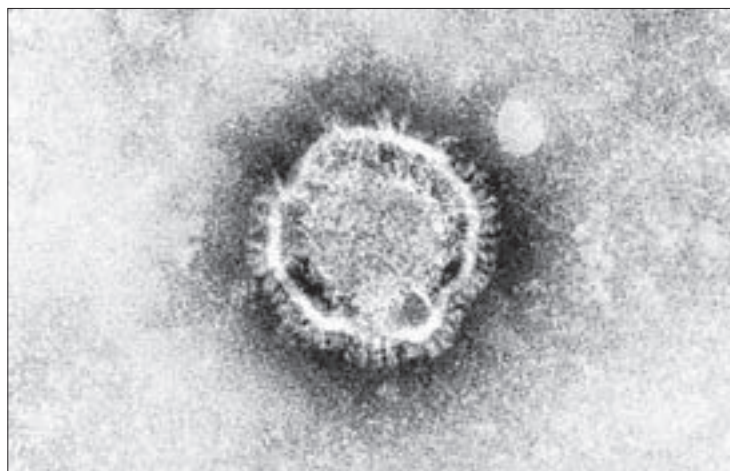
According to Britain's Health Protection Agency, the latest patient is a U.K. resident with no recent travel to any of those countries but who had close personal contact with an earlier case. The patient may also have been at greater risk of infection due to an underlying medical condition and is currently in intensive care at a Birmingham hospital.

"Although this case provides strong evidence for person to person transmission, the risk of infection in most circumstances is still considered to be very low," John Watson, head of the respiratory diseases department at the Health Protection Agency, said in a statement. "If (the) novel coronavirus were more infectious, we would have expected to have seen a larger number of cases."

Six hospital staffers where the patient is being treated are being monitored for infection but none have so far showed any symptoms of the illness. The patient did not come into contact with any other hospital patients and is currently being kept in isolation.

The new coronavirus is part of a family of viruses that cause ailments including the common cold and SARS. In 2003, a global outbreak of SARS killed about 800 people worldwide.

Officials at the



**This undated image released by the British Health Protection Agency shows an electron microscope image of a coronavirus, part of a family of viruses that cause ailments including the common cold and SARS, which was first identified last year in the Middle East.**

**Associated Press**

World Health Organization said the new virus has probably already spread between humans in some instances. In Saudi Arabia last year, four members of the same family fell ill and two died. And in a cluster of about a dozen people in Jordan, the virus may have spread at a hospital's intensive care unit.

"We know that in some of those cases there was close physical contact between family members caring for one another, so we can't rule out human-to-human transmission," said Gregory Hartl, a WHO spokesman. He said there were still big gaps in the understanding of the novel coronavirus, which can cause acute

pneumonia and kidney failure. Of the 11 cases to date, five people have died.

Health experts still aren't sure how humans are being infected. The new coronavirus is most closely related to a bat virus and scientists are considering whether bats or other animals like goats or camels are a possible source of infection.

Michael Osterholm, an infectious diseases expert at the University of Minnesota, warned the virus could be adapting into a more transmissible form. "At any moment the fire hydrant of human-to-human transmission cases could open," he said.

"This is definitely a 'stay tuned' moment." He noted that before SARS sparked a worldwide epidemic, there were a handful of human-to-human cases, until something happened, like a virus mutation, which triggered an explosion of cases. □

## Report: U.S. system needed to fight fake drugs

**LAURAN NEERGAARD**  
**AP Medical Writer**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Fighting the problem of fake drugs will require putting medications through a chain of custody like U.S. courts require for evidence in a trial, the Institute of Medicine reported Wednesday.

The call for a national drug tracking system comes a week after the Food and Drug Administration warned doctors, for the third time in about a year, that it discovered a counterfeit batch of the cancer drug Avastin that lacked the real tumor-killing ingredient.

Fake and substandard drugs have become an increasing concern as U.S. pharmaceutical companies move more of their manufacturing overseas.

The risk made headlines in 2008 when U.S. patients died from a contaminated blood thinner imported from China.

The Institute of Medicine report made clear that this is a global problem that requires an international response, with developing coun-

tries especially at risk from phony medications. Drug-resistant tuberculosis, for example, is fueled in part by watered-down medications sold in many poor countries.

"There can be nothing worse than for a patient to take a medication that either doesn't work or poisons the patient," said Lawrence O. Gostin, a professor of health law at Georgetown University who led the IOM committee that studied how to combat the growing problem.

A mandatory drug-tracking system could use some form of barcodes or electronic tags to verify that a medication and the ingredients used to make it are authentic at every step, from the manufacturing of the active ingredient all the way to the pharmacy, he said. His committee examined fakes so sophisticated that health experts couldn't tell the difference between the packaging of the FDA-approved product and the look-alike.

"It's unreliable unless you know where it's been and can secure each point in the supply chain," Gostin said.

Patient safety advocates have pushed for that kind of tracking system for years, but attempts to include it in FDA drug-safety legislation last summer failed.

The report also concluded that:

—The World Health Organization should develop an international code of practice that sets guidelines for monitoring, regulation and law enforcement to crack down on fake drugs.

—States should beef up licensing requirements for the wholesalers and distributors who get a drug from its manufacturer to the pharmacy, hospital or doctor's office.

—Internet pharmacies are a particularly weak link, because fraudulent sites can mimic legitimate ones.

The report urged wider promotion of the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy's online accreditation program as a tool to help consumers spot trustworthy sites.

The Institute of Medicine is an independent organization that advises the government on health matters. □



# Brazil: local company has patent on iPhone brand

JULIANA BARBASSA

Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Brazil's patent authority has taken a bite out of Apple with an announcement Wednesday that the iPhone name in Brazil belongs to a local company called Gradiente SA, not to the global computer giant. The official publication of the verdict doesn't forbid Apple from using the name in Brazil. It only makes it clear the rights belong to the Brazilian company, said Marcelo Chimento, spokesman with the national patent office. Stopping misuse of the name is beyond the patent office's purview, and would have to be decided in court. Another option is for the two companies to reach an agreement, he said.

Apple's Brazil office said the company had no comment. Calls and emails to IGB Eletronica, Gradiente's parent company, were not immediately returned. The decision was issued on Ash Wednesday, which is observed as a holiday in Brazil. Gradiente filed its request to use the iPhone brand in 2000, believing that "there would be a technological revolution in the world of cellphones, with the convergence of transmission and reception of voice and data via mobile Internet," it said in a press release.

The company was the first to make cellphones in Brazil, and launched the first national smartphone in 2004. Their request to use the iPhone trademark was granted in 2008, and the company started making 'iphones' — with a lower-case 'p' — in December. Their phones are entirely



In this Tuesday Dec. 13, 2011, file photo, a customer uses a computer to access the Apple iTunes store at an Apple store in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Associated Press

different from the Apple product. For starters, the Gradiente phones run on the Android operating system, developed by Apple rival Google Inc. They also have lower screen resolution, weigh more than the Apple phone, and sell for a fraction of the price.

The issue in Brazil is reminiscent of one that arose in the United States in 2007. Cisco Systems had owned the iPhone trademark since 2000, and had been using it for a line of Internet-connected phones.

Once Apple announced its intention to use the brand name, Cisco sued it in San Francisco federal court. The two companies settled out of court six weeks later, without disclosing the terms.

Brazil will likely see a similar solution, with Apple

probably choosing to pay the Brazilian company for the right to use the iPhone brand in Latin America's largest country, a telecom-

munications analyst told the Associated Press in December.

This seems the best option for Apple, because it

"doesn't want to stop selling its product in Brazil," Eduardo Tude, president of Brazilian telecommunications consultancy Teleco. □

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# Cisco's fiscal 2Q earnings rise above Street views

**SAN FRANCISCO (AP) —**

Cisco's latest quarterly report is providing further evidence that spending on technology gear is picking up despite persisting concerns about a still-shaky economy.

The earnings announced Wednesday exceeded analyst projections for the world's largest maker of computer networking equipment.

Cisco Systems Inc.'s quarterly performances and forecasts are widely regarded as a way to assess the state of the technology industry.

That's because the San Jose, California, company cuts a broad swath while selling its routers, switches, software and services to corporate customers and government agencies around the world.

Cisco earned \$3.1 billion, or 59 cents per share, during a three-month span ending Jan. 26. That represented a 44 percent increase from \$2.2 billion, or 40 cents per share, in the previous year.

The results for Cisco's fiscal second quarter received a big boost from tax benefits and credits totaling \$926 million, or 17 cents per share. Even without those one-time gains, the company earnings still would have been slightly better than the previous year.

Excluding the tax lift and certain accounting charges, Cisco said it earned 50 cents per share.

That was 2 cents per share above the average estimate of analyst surveyed by FactSet.

Revenue edged up 5 percent to \$12.1 billion, in line with analyst forecasts.

Although he described the economy as "challenging" in a prepared statement, Cisco CEO John Chambers said the company's product mix remains in strong demand.

Chambers is expected to elaborate on his view of the economy during the company's Wednesday conference call. Cisco typically also shares its outlook for the current quarter on the call.



**Cisco Systems Inc. releases financial results for the last quarter of 2012 on Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2013, after the market closes.**

(AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez)

Investors appeared to be expecting a better perfor-

mance in the latest quarter. Cisco's stock dipped 24

cents to \$20.90 in extended trading. □

**For 2012:**

## Peugeot Citroen posts \$6.7B loss

**GREG KELLER**  
**AP Business Writer**

**PARIS (AP) —** PSA Peugeot Citroen posted a record €5 billion (\$6.7 billion) loss last year after Europe's cratering car market forced France's largest automaker to book a €3 billion financial charge.

As well as falling demand, which led to a 12.4 percent slump in new vehicle sales to €27.8 billion, the Paris-based company had to contend with the rising cost of steel and other materials. Combined, they contributed to an operating loss of €1.5 billion for the car-making division last year.

The bad fortunes of the company — which makes two-thirds of France's cars — are weighing on French President Francois Hollande and his Socialist government, and have prompted protests and strikes in recent months over layoffs and planned plant closures.

Chief Executive Philippe Varin said the loss "reflects the deteriorated environment in the automotive sector in Europe."



**PSA Peugeot Citroen Chief Executive Philippe Varin delivers his speech during a news conference in Paris Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2013.**

(AP Photo/Francois Mori)

The number of new car registrations in Europe fell by 8.2 percent last year to the lowest level since 1995, according to Brussels-based car industry group ACEA. The French car market slumped 13.9 percent in 2012.

Peugeot Citroen is being hit by a deepening recession in many markets in Europe, its main market. The company's share price has sunk nearly 60 percent over the last year. With news of the massive 2012 charge having been unveiled by the company last week, investors were not taken by

surprise with Wednesday's announcement. The stock rebounded from recent lows, and was up 2.5 percent at €6.09 in early trading.

Peugeot's troubles, which were already signaled by the near \$1 billion loss it recorded in the first half of the year, have drawn concern at the highest levels of the French government. Last week the budget minister openly floated the idea of the government taking a stake in Peugeot, but the idea was immediately batted down by the finance minister. □

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## Deere 1Q net income jumps up 22 percent

**MOLINE, Illinois (AP)** — Farm and construction equipment maker Deere & Co. said Wednesday that its first-quarter net income leaped 22 percent on growing sales of farm machinery at higher prices. The company's earnings soundly beat Wall Street expectations. In the quarter ending Jan. 31, Deere said it earned \$649.7 million, or \$1.65 per share, compared with \$532.9 million, or \$1.30 per share, a year earlier. Revenue rose almost 10 percent to \$7.42 billion. Analysts surveyed by FactSet expected earnings of \$1.39 per share on revenue of \$6.73 billion. Deere is executing its marketing plans, expanding its global presence and keeping a tight grip on costs, Chairman and CEO Samuel Allen said in a statement. The company predicted that sales would rise about 4 percent in the second quarter and 6 percent for the full year. It expects 2013 net income of about \$3.3 billion, slightly more than its earlier forecasts and the predictions of analysts. But Allen cautioned that although Deere sees strong future results on growing need for food, shelter and infrastructure, "the near-term outlook is being tempered by uncertainties over fiscal, economic and trade issues that are undermining business confidence and restraining growth." □

# A slump in McDonald's stock holds back Dow

**STEVE ROTHWELL**  
AP Business Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — The Dow was held back by a slump in McDonald's stock Wednesday, leaving it short of a record. The Dow Jones industrial average shed 35.79 points, or 0.3 percent, to close at 13,982.91. The Dow has gained 6.7 percent this year and is just 182 points below the record close of 14,164 it set in October 2007. McDonald's was the biggest decliner in the Dow, losing \$1.10 to \$94, as investors worried that Americans will spend less on eating out following a rise in Social Security taxes at the beginning of the year. The government reported early Wednesday that spending by Americans barely grew last month. Other fast-food companies also fell. Buffalo Wild Wings stock plunged \$4.52 to \$76.55 after its earnings fell short of analysts' expectations. Burger King and Wendy's also fell. "Consumer spending is coming under pressure," said Bryan Elliott, an analyst at Raymond James. "It's the easiest way to save money, stay at home and cook." The Standard & Poor's 500 index edged up 0.90 point to 1,520.33. The index climbed as high as 1,524 during the day, the highest since November 2007. It is

up 6.6 percent so far this year. Investors sent General Electric and Comcast higher after GE agreed

ing cuts. Investors are also becoming more optimistic that the housing market is recovering and that hiring is picking up.

were key topics in President Barack Obama's State of the Union address late Tuesday, the first since his re-election. Although the economy is healthier than it was four years ago, growth remains slow and unemployment high. Obama announced that the U.S. will begin talks with the European Union on a trans-Atlantic trade agreement. He also called for increased spending to fix roads and bridges and the first increase in the minimum wage in six years. The president also challenged deeply divided lawmakers to find compromises to avoid massive, automatic spending cuts that are scheduled to take place March 1. The government reported that Americans' spending at retail businesses and restaurants slowed last month after higher taxes cut their paychecks. Retail sales growth slowed to 0.1 percent in January, from a 0.5 percent increase in December. The Nasdaq composite rose 10.38 points to 3,196.88. As stocks have advanced this year, bond prices have slumped. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note, which moves inversely to its price, rose 4 basis points to 2.02 percent. The yield on the note has risen more than 30 basis points since the start of the year. □



An urban McDonald's restaurant operates during business hours. The Dow was held back by a slump in McDonald's stock Wednesday, leaving it short of a record.

(Handout Photo)

Tuesday to sell its stake in NBCUniversal to Comcast for \$16.7 billion. GE said it would use up to \$10 billion of the money to buy back its own stock. GE rose 81 cents to \$23.39. Comcast advanced \$1.16 to \$40.13. Trading has been relatively quiet in recent days following a strong opening to the year. The Dow logged its best January in almost two decades after lawmakers reached a last-minute deal to avoid the "fiscal cliff" of sweeping tax increases and spend-

"We're cautiously optimistic on stocks," said Colleen Supran, principal at Bingham, Osborn & Scarborough. "There is some indication that we could be continuing on this slow growth trajectory." Supran said investors should still be prepared for volatility in the stock market and not assume that the gains from January and so far in February will set the pattern for the rest of the year. Strengthening the economy and creating jobs

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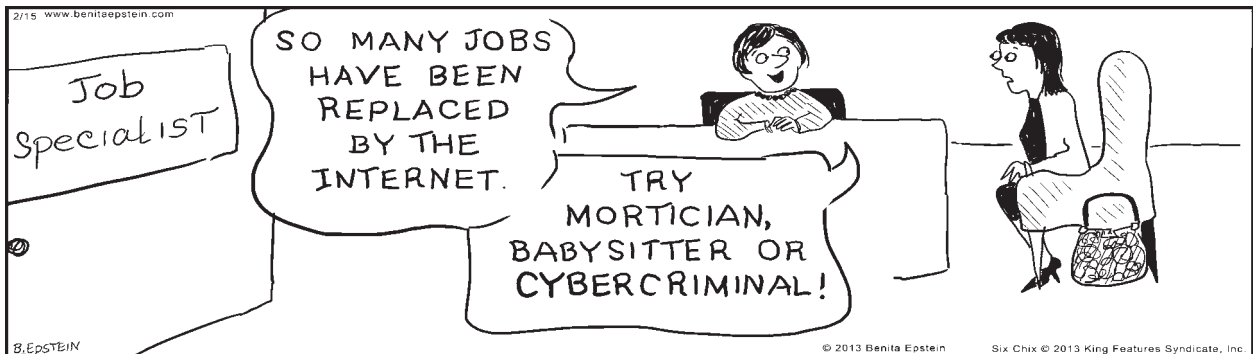
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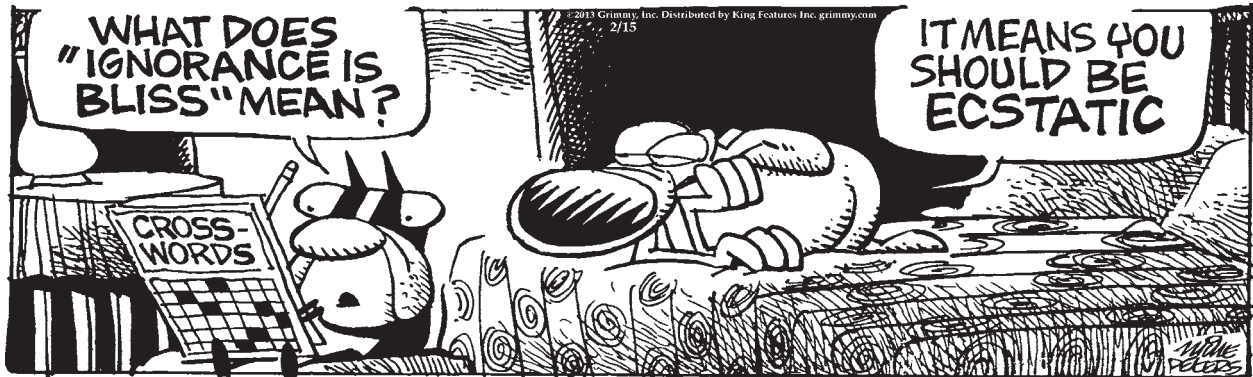
## 6 Chix



## Blondie



## Mother Goose & Grimm



## Baby Blues



## Zits



## Conceptis Sudoku

	9	2			5			4
								8
				6				
6	3				7	2		
		9		4		1		
		5	8				4	9
				1				
1								
8			9			3	6	

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

2/15

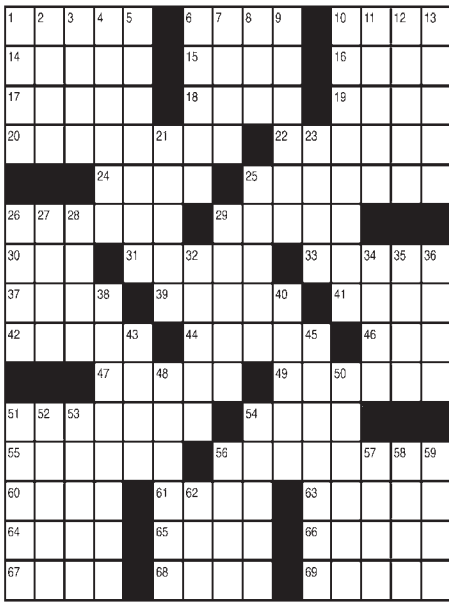
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

6	5	8	4	2	7	9	1	3
1	3	4	8	9	6	5	7	2
7	9	2	3	1	5	8	6	4
2	8	6	7	5	1	3	4	9
9	1	3	2	6	4	7	5	8
4	7	5	9	8	3	6	2	1
5	4	7	1	3	9	2	8	6
8	6	9	5	4	2	1	3	7
3	2	1	6	7	8	4	9	5

### ACROSS

- 1 \_\_\_ at; deride  
6 Tiny metric weight  
10 Incite  
14 Romeo  
15 Wild overnight dance party  
16 Give a traffic ticket to  
17 "Goodnight, \_\_\_"; folk song  
18 Got older  
19 Detest  
20 Feel; sense  
22 Pressed, as a shirt  
24 Uptight  
25 Seamen  
26 Cop's beat  
29 \_\_\_ Fe, NM  
30 Geisha's sash  
31 Nincompoop  
33 Standing straight  
37 Sound of a contented cat  
39 Refueling ship  
41 On \_\_\_; offered at a lower price  
42 Cook in a Presto  
44 Actress Bo \_\_\_  
46 Hint to an actor  
47 Capitol roofs, often  
49 National song  
51 Hand over  
54 Set \_\_\_; liberate  
55 Found a new purpose for  
56 Olive stuffings  
60 Part of the foot  
61 Laila & her dad  
63 Physicist Pierre or wife Marie  
64 Present with walking papers  
65 Loaned  
66 Sports building  
67 Trevino's pegs  
68 Droops  
69 Takes a quick look



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

2/15/13

### Thursday's Puzzle Solved

STAR	CAMEL	ITEM
NONE	OLIVE	MAYA
AGED	PINEAPPLES	
PAS	SICK	LEEDS
TEPEE	SAD	
MOHAIR	GENEVA	
OVERT	CLOAK	IRA
PASS	GLEAM	HEEL
ELI	WOODED	METAL
SACRED	TEENSY	
HIS	FONDA	
SALON	LOAD	MAT
ANALGESICS	RELY	
FETE	GAMUT	ASAP
EWER	GYPSY	GENE

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2/15/13

### DOWN

- 1 Woman's undergarment

- 2 Apple's center  
3 Finished; done  
4 Epée wielder  
5 Liberty  
6 Mashed potato topping, often  
7 Hit the ceiling  
8 "\_\_\_ Maria"  
9 Center of the highway  
10 Studious pupils  
11 Instrument for Elton John  
12 Speak  
13 Marsh grasses  
21 House of snow  
23 Ceremony  
25 Not as kooky  
26 Bursts  
27 Border on  
28 Grow fatigued  
29 Shoe bottoms  
32 Passenger  
34 Per person  
35 Classic board game  
36 Abound  
38 Veggies on a relish tray
- 52 Spine-chilling  
53 Ill-gotten gain  
54 Clenched hands  
56 \_\_\_-Pong  
57 Ash or alder  
58 Cry from a sty  
59 Red and Dead  
62 Meadow



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# U.S. scientists searching for alien life on Earth

**CARRIE ANTLFINGER**

**Associated Press**

**MADISON, Wisconsin (AP)**

— Some U.S. scientists are helping search for evidence of alien life not by looking into outer space, but by studying some rocks right here on Earth.

Some of the rocks are up to 3.5 billion years old. The scientists are looking for crucial information to understand how life might have arisen elsewhere in the universe and guide the search for life on Mars one day. "There's a story always hidden in rocks," said geoscientist Clark Johnson, the lead investigator for the Wisconsin Astrobiology Research Consortium. "... It's up to (geologists) to be clever enough to find the tools that we need to interrogate those rocks to find what story they preserve." The University of Wisconsin-Madison project is funded through the U.S. space agency NASA, which provided a \$7 million, five-year grant that started in January. It was the group's second five-year, \$7 million grant. The consortium has been tasked with finding footprints of biological activity, or biosignatures, which are substances such as elements or isotopes that show evidence of ancient life. The scientists are looking for microscopic signs of life, including microbes, which are bacteria, and other tiny, one-celled organisms that are much more adaptable than more complex organisms. The team is also sending microbes into Earth's orbit on the International Space Station to see how they react to radiation and a space environment.

In the process, they are



In this Jan. 22, 2013 photo University of Wisconsin-Madison Geoscientist Clark Johnson holds what he says is a 3.5 billion year old rock in Madison, Wis.

learning more about Earth's history. They've found new details of microbial life that dates back 2 billion to 3 billion years, before the planet's atmosphere contained oxygen. They've found that microbes then relied more on iron than sunlight for energy. Eventually their work will be used to interpret data beamed back from Mars by the six-wheel spacecraft Curiosity, which landed in August on a two-year mission to determine whether the environment was ever favorable for microbial life. Their work will also be used to prepare

for future Mars missions. "It may be that planets spent a long time in a microbial life condition and then only rarely evolved to advanced multicellular complex life," Johnson said. "That's one of the hypothesis we would test."

Edward Goolish, acting director at the NASA Astrobiology Institute, said the project supports one of NASA's major goals to find life or the potential for life elsewhere. The project's results will provide a quantitative understanding of how

life is preserved, he said. "At the same time (Johnson's team is) contributing an immense amount to the understanding of life on Earth, which is equally important to astrobiology and science in general," he said. □

**Associated Press**

## 1,500-year-old landfill discovered in U.S.VI

**CHARLOTTE AMALIE, U.S. Virgin Islands (AP)** —

Crews renovating a public square in the U.S. Virgin Islands have discovered a 1,500-year-old landfill stuffed with shells, bones and pottery fragments, the government said Wednesday.

A team of specialized archaeologists will arrive soon to further excavate the pre-Columbian site, located in the capital

of Charlotte Amalie on St. Thomas, said Public Works Commissioner Darryl Smalls.

The landfill, historically known as a midden, features hundreds of sea snail shells and bones from fish, birds, rodents and marine mammals.

"From this, the archaeologists can learn about what the first people of Charlotte Amalie ate, their environment and life," Smalls

said. "This will be our only chance to connect to the people who lived here 1,500 years ago."

Some of the pottery fragments feature stylized eyes, Smalls said.

"The pottery is beautifully made, thin with very smooth surfaces," he said. Smalls said local historians who analyzed the midden have determined it is one of the most important sites of its age on St. Thomas. □

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# Beyonce hopes her documentary inspires Blue Ivy

JOHN CARUCCI  
Associated Press

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Beyonce is hoping that her ultra-revealing documentary will someday provide inspiration for Blue Ivy, the year-old daughter she and husband Jay-Z have.

"I hope that she will see all of the beautiful times (and) all the tough times that led up to her being here," the singer said Tuesday night at the New York premiere of her upcoming HBO documentary, "Life is But a Dream."

She added: "I'm hoping that ... it can comfort her and inspire her in her life when she needs it."

The autobiographical film takes a no-holds-barred look at the entertainer. It stems from personal conversations the 31-year old singer made using the video camera on her computer over the past couple of years. It also

includes home movies of the Grammy-winning singer and her two sisters.

In the film, Beyonce candidly discusses personal matters like her miscarriage, reports of faking her pregnancy, and firing her father as her manager.

She claims the process of talking into a camera to get all her thoughts out was therapeutic.

"I really grew so much," she says of the process. "This movie has really been my therapy. I've healed from so many wounds and I've been able to understand why some of the things I've been through, why I went through, so I feel really proud, and hopefully I can inspire other people."

The singer has been private about her life in the past. But she felt the time was right to let people know how she felt.

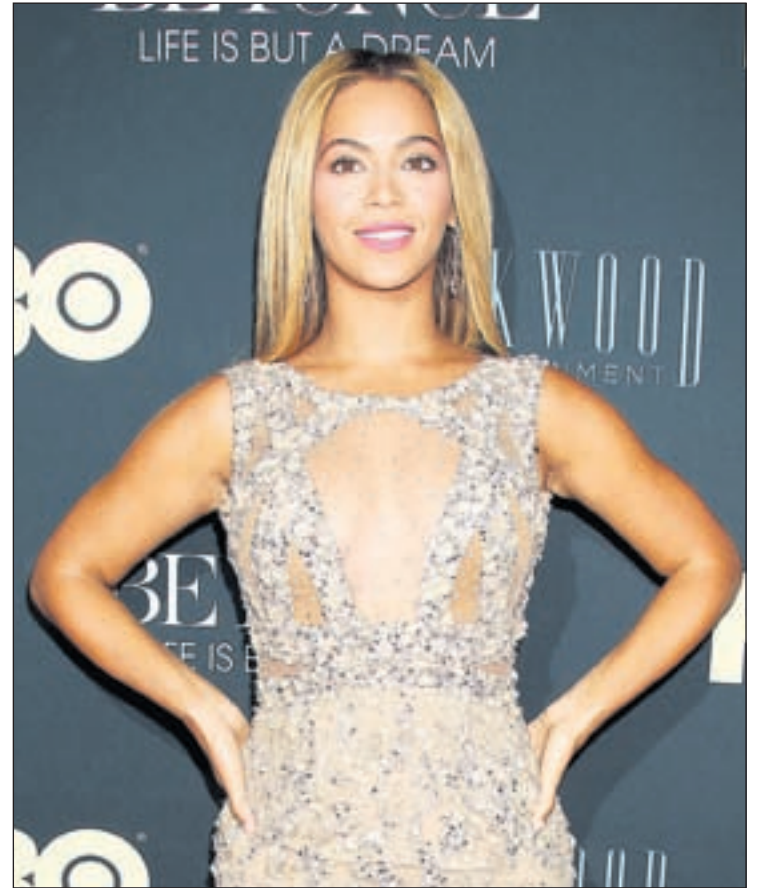
"I felt that after 16 years of being a public singer,

people didn't know who I was," she admitted. But then she added: "I will always keep certain things to myself because it's only natural."

Oprah Winfrey made a surprise visit to the premiere, and posed with Beyonce on the red carpet. Before going into the Ziegfeld Theatre, Winfrey, known for her tough, results-driven interview style, was asked if this was the kind of story she would have done on Beyonce.

She said Beyonce did a "much better job" of telling her own story. "I wouldn't have been in the bedroom and in the closet and in the car and on vacation," she said.

Beyonce acted as the film's executive producer and co-directed it with Ed Burke. He previously worked on some of her video projects. "Life is But a Dream" airs Saturday on HBO, a cable television station. □



This image released by Starpix shows Beyonce at the premiere of her HBO documentary "Beyonce: Life is But a Dream," at the The Ziegfeld Theatre in New York. The film premieres on Saturday, Feb. 16, at 9 p.m. EST on HBO.

Associated Press

## Catch your own dinner with Driftwood!

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# MacFarlane gets Oscar-hosting advice from Crystal

**SANDY COHEN**

**AP Entertainment Writer**

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Despite getting advice from Billy Crystal and working as hard as he can to prepare to host the Academy Awards, Seth MacFarlane thinks his hosting gig is a “one-off” and that he’ll be “flayed by the press” no matter what he does.

Speaking to reporters Tuesday from the Dolby Theatre, where he’ll host the 85th annual Oscar ceremony on Feb. 24, the entertainer was alternately confident and self-deprecating.

“I’m not feeling a lot of pressure from myself,” he said. “There is sort of a comfort in knowing that no matter what you do, you’re going to get the same reactions in the reviews. So I could put on the worst or the best show in the world and I will still be flayed by the press.” Still, he said he’s spent five months trying to strike a comedic balance that



In this Jan. 13, 2013 file photo, 2013 Oscar host Seth MacFarlane presents the Academy nominations for the 85th Academy Awards in Beverly Hills, Calif.

Associated Press

will satisfy the fans of his animated shows and the comparatively highbrow audience inside the Dolby Theatre.

“I’ve set myself up for the hardest job in the world

because the fans of ‘Family Guy’ and ‘Ted’ and the shows and whatnot that I do are expecting one thing. If I deliver that, this crowd will walk out,” he said.

He promises to add bite to the show — “The whole point of their bringing me on was to give it a little bit more of an edge” — but acknowledges there will be a lot of ego in the audience.

“You have a room full of people who are at the top of their game — they’re successful, they’re being honored, they’re attractive — and yet this is also the group with the thinnest skin on the planet,” he said, “so it’s a tough group.”

Ultimately, he hopes to hybridize the pointed barbs of

three-time Golden Globes host Ricky Gervais with the classy style of Crystal, who hosted the Oscars nine times, most recently last year.

The 39-year-old entertainer said Crystal gave him some helpful advice, including “get comfortable with your shoes before you go on stage.”

MacFarlane will sing during the show and is also a nominee for his original song for “Ted,” but said he expects to lose the category to Adele.

He’s aiming for “very much a classic Oscars with a much more current edge,” and said, “It’s impossible to work any harder than I have in preparation for this,” but he still doesn’t think he’ll be invited back. □

## New covers commissioned for Harry Potter books

**NEW YORK (AP)** — The Harry Potter books are getting a makeover.

Scholastic Inc. announced Wednesday that new covers have been commissioned for U.S. trade paperback editions of J.K. Rowling’s blockbuster series. The first new cover, for “Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone,” replaces Mary GrandPre’s iconic sandy-colored design of Harry in flight with a purplish-blue street setting by graphic novelist Kazu Kibishi. The GrandPre illustrations will still be used for hardcovers and mass market paperbacks.

The new edition of “Sorcerer’s Stone” is scheduled for September, the 15th anniversary of Potter’s debut in the U.S. The British editions are published by Bloomsbury. They have long had separate designs from the U.S. versions. □



This book cover image released by Scholastic Inc., shows the cover for the U.S. trade paperback editions of J.K. Rowling’s blockbuster “Harry Potter” series.

Associated Press



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## 'Suicide Conservatives'



CHARLES M. BLOW

© 2013 New York Times  
There used to be a political truisim: Democrats fall in love, while Republicans fall in line. That's no longer true. Not in this moment. Democrats have learned to fall in love and fall in line. Republicans are just falling apart.

Last week, the opening salvos were launched in a very public and very nasty civil war between establishment Republicans and Tea Party supporters when it was reported that Karl Rove was backing a new group, the Conservative Victory Project, to counter the Tea Party's selection of loopy congressional candidates who lose in general elections.

The Tea Party was having none of it. It sees Rove's group as a brazen attack on the Tea Party movement, which it is. Rove sees winning as a practical matter. The Tea Party counts victory in layers of philosophical purity. Politico reported this week that an unnamed "senior Republican operative" said that one of the party's biggest problems was "suicide conservatives, who would rather lose elections than win seats with moderates." Democrats could be the ultimate beneficiaries of this tiff. Of the 33 senate seats up for election in 2014, 20 are held by Democrats. Seven of those 20 are in states that President Barack Obama lost in the last presidential election. Republicans would only have to pick up a handful of seats to take control of the chamber.

But some in the Tea Party are threatening that if their candidate is defeated in the primaries by a candidate backed by Rove's group, they might still run the Tea Party candidate in the general election. That would virtually guarantee a Democratic victory.

Sal Russo, a Tea Party strategist, told Politico: "We discourage our people from supporting third-party candidates by saying 'that's a big mistake. We shouldn't do that.'" He added: "But if the position ((Rove's allies)) take is rule or ruin — well, two can play that game. And if we get pushed, we're not going to be able to keep the lid on that."

The skirmish speaks to a broader problem: a party that has lost its way and can't rally around a unified, coherent vision of what it wants to be when it grows up. The traditional Republican mes-

sage doesn't work. Rhetorically, the GOP is the party of calamity. The sky is always falling. Everything is broken. Freedoms are falling. Tomorrow is dimmer than today.

In Republicans' world, we must tighten our belts until we crush our spines. We must take a road to prosperity that runs through the desert of austerity. We must cut to grow. Republicans are the last guardians against bad governance.

But how can they sell this message to a public that has rejected it in the last two presidential elections?

Some say keep the terms but soften the tone.

A raft of Republicans, many of them possible contenders in 2016, have been trying this approach.

Louisiana's governor, Bobby Jindal, speaking at a Republican National Committee meeting last month, chastised his party for being "the stupid party" that's "in love with zeros," even as he insisted, "I am not one of those who believe we should moderate, equivocate, or otherwise abandon our principles." Jindal's plan, like that of many other Republicans, boils down to two words: talk differently.

Other Republicans, like Marco Rubio, seem to want to go further. They understand that the party must behave differently. He is among a group of senators who recently put forward a comprehensive immigration proposal that would offer a pathway to citizenship for the millions of undocumented immigrants in this country.

This is a position Democrats have advocated, and it's a position Republicans have to accept to if they want Hispanic support — and a chance of winning a presidential election.

The Tea Party crowd did not seem pleased with that plan. Glenn Beck, the self-described "rodeo clown" of the right, said: "You've got John McCain, Lindsey Graham, and now Marco Rubio joining them because Marco Rubio just has to win elections. I'm done. I'm done. Learn the Constitution. Somebody has to keep a remnant of the Constitution alive."

For Beck's wing of the party, moderation is surrender, and surrender is death. It seems to want to go further out on a limb that's getting ever more narrow. For that crowd, being a Tea Party supporter is more a religion than a political philosophy. They believe so deeply and fervently in it that they see no need for either message massage or actual compromise.

While most Democrats and independents want politicians to compromise, Republicans don't, according to a January report by the Pew Research Center. The zealots have a chokehold on that party, and they're sucking the life — and common sense — out of it.

For this brand of Republican, there is victory in self-righteous defeat. □



## The Ignorance Caucus



PAUL KRUGMAN

© 2013 New York Times

Last week Eric Cantor, the House majority leader, gave what his office told us would be a major policy speech. And we should be grateful for the heads-up about the speech's majormess. Otherwise, a read of the speech might have suggested that he was offering nothing more than a meager, warmed-over selection of stale ideas.

To be sure, Cantor tried to sound interested in serious policy discussion. But he didn't succeed — and that was no accident. For these days his party dislikes the whole idea of applying critical thinking and evidence to policy questions.

And no, that's not a caricature: Last year the Texas GOP explicitly condemned efforts to teach "critical thinking skills," because, it said, such efforts "have the purpose of challenging the student's fixed beliefs and undermining parental authority."

And such is the influence of what we might call the ignorance caucus that even when giving a speech intended to demonstrate his openness to new ideas, Cantor felt obliged to give that caucus a shout-out, calling for a complete end to federal funding of social science research. Because it's surely a waste of money seeking to understand the society we're trying to change.

Want other examples of the ignorance caucus at work? Start with health care, an area in

which Cantor tried not to sound anti-intellectual; he lavished praise on medical research just before attacking federal support for social science. (By the way, how much money are we talking about? Well, the entire National Science Foundation budget for social and economic sciences amounts to a whopping 0.01 percent of the budget deficit.)

But Cantor's support for medical research is curiously limited. He's all for developing new treatments, but he and his colleagues have adamantly opposed "comparative effectiveness research," which seeks to determine how well such treatments work.

What they fear, of course, is that the people running Medicare and other government programs might use the results of such research to determine what they're willing to pay for. Instead, they want to turn Medicare into a voucher system and let individuals make decisions about treatment. But even if you think that's a good idea (it isn't), how are individuals supposed to make good medical choices if we ensure that they have no idea what health benefits, if any, to expect from their choices?

Still, the desire to perpetuate ignorance on matters medical is nothing compared with the desire to kill climate research, where Cantor's colleagues — particularly, as it happens, in his home state of Virginia — have engaged in furious witch hunts against scientists who find evidence they don't like.

True, the state has finally agreed to study the growing risk of coastal flooding; Norfolk is among the U.S. cities most vulnerable to climate change. But Republicans in the state Legislature have specifically prohibited the use of the words "sea-level rise."

And there are many other examples, like the way House Republicans tried to suppress a

Congressional Research Service report casting doubt on claims about the magical growth effects of tax cuts for the wealthy. Do actions like this have important effects? Well, consider the agonized discussions of gun policy that followed the Newtown massacre. It would be helpful to these discussions if we had a good grasp of the facts about firearms and violence.

But we don't, because back in the 1990s conservative politicians, acting on behalf of the National Rifle Association, bullied federal agencies into ceasing just about all research into the issue. Willful ignorance matters.

OK, at this point the conventions of punditry call for saying something to demonstrate my evenhandedness, something along the lines of "Democrats do it too."

But while Democrats, being human, often read evidence selectively and choose to believe things that make them comfortable, there really isn't anything equivalent to Republicans' active hostility to collecting evidence in the first place.

The truth is that America's partisan divide runs much deeper than even pessimists are usually willing to admit; the parties aren't just divided on values and policy views, they're divided over epistemology. One side believes, at least in principle, in letting its policy views be shaped by facts; the other believes in suppressing the facts if they contradict its fixed beliefs. In her parting shot on leaving the State Department, Hillary Rodham Clinton said of her Republican critics, "They just will not live in an evidence-based world."

She was referring specifically to the Benghazi controversy, but her point applies much more generally. And for all the talk of reforming and reinventing the GOP, the ignorance caucus retains a firm grip on the party's heart and mind. □



# Romance your Valentine with dinner for two

**MELISSA CLARK**

© 2013 New York Times

There may be one true love, but there is no one true way to do dinner on Valentine's Day. If you're paired off, you could book the traditional table for two at a restaurant. It will be filled with other couples doing the same, attempting to ignore one another while pitching woo over oysters on the half shell.

Passionate cooks, myself included, might shun going out, confecting tete-a-tete meals in their own homes instead.

slab serves three to four, and it requires only a few extra minutes in the oven. Then add steaks as needed, bearing in mind that each one should cook in its own skillet.

At our house, seared steak demands potatoes bathed in duck fat and roasted till their skins are crisp. This recipe multiplies out neatly and infinitely as long as you have oven space.

To enhance the voluptuous factor, I added soft chunks of avocado to arugula salad, and garlic and anchovy to the dressing. The key

Leftovers will be equally seductive the next day – you know, just like your Valentine.

## SEARED RIB STEAK

Time: 30 minutes

Yield: 2 servings

1 bone-in rib steak, 1 1/2 inches thick

1 garlic clove, halved

Coarse kosher salt

Black pepper

1. Heat a heavy ovenproof skillet (preferably cast iron) over high heat for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, heat your broiler.

2. Pat steak dry with pa-

Coarse kosher salt

2 tablespoons duck fat (or olive oil)

2 sprigs rosemary

3 cloves garlic, smashed

Cracked black pepper

1. Heat oven to 425 degrees. Place potatoes in a small pot and cover completely with generously salted water. Bring water to a boil and cook potatoes until fork tender, about 10 to 15 minutes. Drain and allow potatoes to rest until cool enough to touch. Using the palms of your hands, carefully smash potatoes until flat but still in one piece.

more as needed

Fleur de Sel, to taste

1. Create an ice bath in a large bowl using ice and a little cold water. Nestle a smaller bowl in ice bath.

2. Place chocolate and 1 cup water in a small pot and heat over medium. Whisk until mixture is melted and smooth, about 3 to 5 minutes.

3. Immediately pour melted chocolate into the bowl in the ice bath. Vigorously whisk chocolate mixture by hand until thick, 3 to 5 minutes. The chocolate should be fluffy and form a mound when dolloped with the whisk. (It should generally have the texture and appearance of mousse.) If the mixture does not thicken, add a bit more chopped chocolate and remelt over the heat. Spoon into serving bowls and garnish with fleur de sel.

## ARUGULA AND AVOCADO SALAD WITH BAGNA CAUDA DRESSING

Time: 20 minutes

Yield: 2 to 4 servings

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

4 anchovies, finely chopped

1 very large garlic clove, minced

Large pinch kosher salt

1 tablespoon red wine vinegar

Black pepper

1 small bunch arugula, cleaned and torn into pieces (about 3 cups)

1 avocado, peeled, pitted and diced

1. In a small skillet over medium heat, warm the oil. Add anchovies and cook over medium-low heat, stirring, until anchovies melt into the oil, 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in garlic and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Remove from heat and whisk in salt, vinegar and pepper. Let cool to room temperature.

2. In a serving bowl, toss arugula with just enough dressing to coat. Season well with pepper. In a smaller bowl, very gently toss avocado with more of the dressing. (You may not need it all.)

Add avocado to arugula and very gently combine. Serve immediately. □



A studio shot of a suggested Valentine's Day-themed dinner. If, for reasons of family, preference or happenstance, there will be more than just two at the table, this doesn't preclude a Valentine's Day feast.

(Andrew Scrivani/The New York Times)

But what if, for reasons of family, preference or happenstance, you are more than two at dinnertime? This doesn't preclude a Valentine's Day feast. It just changes its tenor.

Aphrodisiacs might be off the table, but you can still serve a classic menu, something celebratory and indulgent.

After all, no meat eater would refuse a juicy steak, which will work no matter if you're cooking for a couple or a crowd.

A bone-in rib steak, 1 1/4 to 1 1/2 inches thick, will feed two.

Scaling up is easy; just buy a thicker steak. A 2-inch

to keeping things romance-friendly is to heat the oil just enough to cook the garlic lightly, which tames its pungency.

For dessert, may I suggest an intense, creamy one-ingredient chocolate mousse adapted from the molecular gastronomist Herve This. This nearly instant recipe has been making the rounds online, but it is too brilliant not to share here, too. It also happens to be vegan; without the distraction of cream or eggs, a complex chocolate can shine. The mousse serves four, and it can be doubled. But even if you're serving two, don't be tempted to halve it.

per towels, then vigorously rub cut side of garlic all over steak, particularly the bone. Season generously all over with salt and pepper.

3. Place steak in hot pan and carefully, using a pot-holder, transfer pan to broiler. Cook meat until done to taste, about 5 to 7 minutes for rare. Transfer steak to a cutting board, and let it rest for 5 to 10 minutes before slicing and serving.

## DUCK FAT ROASTED POTATOES

Time: 1 hourYield: 2 servings

3/4 pound very small Yukon gold or other yellow-flesh potatoes

2. Place potatoes on a small rimmed baking sheet or pan. Drizzle with duck fat and add rosemary and garlic to pan. Generously salt and pepper potatoes, then gently toss them until evenly coated with the duck fat.

3. Roast potatoes for 20 minutes. Flip them, then roast an additional 8 to 10 minutes. Serve warm.

## BITTERSWEET CHOCOLATE MOUSSE WITH FLEUR DE SEL

Adapted from Herve This

Time: 10 minutes

Yield: 4 servings

285 grams bittersweet chocolate (about 10 ounces), roughly chopped,